

Pondering
on points
of POWER,

the problems, pains and pleasures

H. Kirk Rainer

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ISBN Pending

Published by **VANAGON VAGABOND**.

The book is a composition from which I am inspired to write as some redemption from my college record (of poor composition) but more—much more—to work on or through points of POWER, the matters that I wrangle and wrestle with, and then things not yet thought of or about with problems, pains, and pleasures.

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CONSPIRANT COLONIES
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COURAGE in The Crush
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Ruminating near the river

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FORCE, the lowest common denominator of **POWER**, has been highly identified with **POWER** in America; it is the automatic first association with **POWER** of most people in this country.

- Rollo May, *Power, and Innocence*

... the unbridled use of arbitrary POWER, maintained through force and fear, has a demoralizing and degenerating effect on those who use it. It breeds arrogance, intolerance, and sadism.

- Henry Grady Weaver, *The Mainspring of Human Progress*

[The abuse of] **POWER**, said Henry Adams, "is poison"; and it is a poison which blinds the eyes of moral insight and lames the will of moral purpose.

- Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man, and Immoral Society*

Our life as individual persons and as members of a perplexed and struggling race provokes us with the evidence that it must have meaning. Part of the meaning still escapes us. Yet our purpose in life is to discover this meaning and live according to it. We have... something to live for. The process of living, of growing up, and becoming a person, is precisely the gradually increasing awareness of what that something is. This is a difficult task for many reasons.

- Thomas Merton, *No Man is an Island*

Pondering on points of POWER

This collection of very brief composition, each as one page, comes in the aftermath—more the *next round*—of what is aptly described as “unprecedented times” for our nation-state and more, the world.

As the planet and its extensions increasingly approaches a “new world order”, as outlined by our 41st President as necessary against a “threat to decency and humanity¹”, the world on whole is at increased risk given the proclivity if not certainty that *absolute POWER corrupts absolutely*.²

This writing is not driven or motivated exclusively by the current or coming *rounds* and nor by the increasing awareness of “unprecedented times”, but by my desire to learn and to keep learning as to grow, mature and know. I do not expect to ever understand the depth at which *absolute power corrupts* but desire to recognize conditions of/for abuses of power whether having any apparent *skin in the game* or *dog in the fight*, personal or public.

I cannot pretend that I have not or do not abuse what powers afforded me; that I have not at one time or another, deliberate or otherwise, lapsed into such. But I am increasingly convinced that the *root of all evil is the abuse of power*³ and hence that much of the world’s doubts and despair stems from tyranny beyond and beneath the *love of money* but in fact, is spiritual in the heavenly realms.

¹ George Bush Senior, Sept 11, 1991, “NWO Speech”.

² Credited to Lord Acton, this statement occurred in a series of letters concerning the moral problem of writing history about the Inquisition, “power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

³ From Patricia Cornwell, this statement seems to underwrite *the love of money*, as the Scriptures state as *the root of all evil*.

“Points on POWER” is just a title for the things of POWER that bother me from time to time if not often, causing a renewal of the differences between, as well as the connection of, conscious and conscience; my thoughts, feelings, concerns, and cares in/among the problems, pains, and pleasures.

At the start of each page, composition, or concern, is an idiom, each and all intended to generally add some appeal or further interest. But more, to symbolize or suggest a figurative approach at the detail of what bothers me and perhaps, brief as each is, why.

Considering the insights and expression of H. L. Mencken, that “for every complex problem there is an answer that is clear, simple and wrong,” I don’t expect to arrive at any answers on a single page. At the same time, such matters may not be complex, interlinked, or multi-faceted or, if it happens to be, my view may be shrouded in ignorance, some underlying attitude, underqualified aptitude given the singular effort, my *station if life*, all the limitations however ascertained, acknowledged, and accepted.

Each one-page is not a standalone however, but is indeed linked to other topics, pages, and terms; that as symbolized in the network illustrated on the book’s cover and opening page, that one point connects to another and then another, giving some relevance and relations and in turn *more meat to chew-on*, more facets to view, more factors to consider, or simply more.⁴

⁴ The aim or objective is not to necessarily arrive at some conclusion or revelation, but rather is to spontaneously, but thoughtfully, describe my thoughts and feelings, considering the inter-relations, crossing the paths of other writing herein and elsewhere, past, present, and proposed.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Blue or brown studies” must first be defined or described; a *brown study* signifies a melancholy mood, one in deep thought while a “blue” study (the *blues*), is more just a feeling of sadness without necessarily studying the cause or reason.

To begin with this embellished idiom is very relevant, for in and through development of each composition, the question of any sadness or *blues* must be met with a *brown study* ⁵, thought, words and such. Again, one can be sad but not necessarily go further by considering the cause and possibly more, writing on or about it.

In already addressing my strong belief that *the root of all evil is the abuse of POWER*, each topic, beginning with an idiom, and its composition contain some reference to or inference of this belief, the whole of it as perhaps a *brown study*, *the blues* taken to task.

We each do this, some form of *brown study*. We each lapse into a funk on occasion, *the blues* or something even deeper; depression or what was once called *the darkness*—which I believe is potentially healthy or redeeming if somewhere in and through it we learn more about ourselves and others (persons, things), perhaps strengthened, renewed. Without *the darkness* how can we appreciate *the light*?

As to *power*, that which enables us to first face what is most likely some form of fear(s) and then delve into it is, I think, beyond ourselves alone, our individual will or want. My plan and purpose in these *brown studies* is to sunder such powers without abuse(s) but rather with appreciation, given the pains, problems, and pleasures.

⁵ From Merriam-Webster: Today, not all brown studies are “gloomy”—some are merely abstracted—but not, we hope, to the extent that provoked the editors of an encyclopedia of the 1950s to call it “a state nearly related to hypnosis and characterized by the ... arrest of bodily movement.

“Good or bad egg” is a more familiar idiom, more applied in the past perhaps. One called a *good egg* as analogous to a good person, well intended or meaning, in good standing with their community and possibly more. To say, “You’re a pretty good egg,” suggest that you’re *getting there, on the right track or path*, with promise and potential versus a *bad egg*, of no account, even dangerous.

Who or what really defines or describes a *good egg*, good intentions and meaning from something less, maybe malicious, or malevolent?

Morals and standards are not universal to begin with and then more, one appraisal of a person’s character is not always *on par*—or even close! What’s more, the so-called “good egg” may be putting up appearances or worse, consciously deceiving....

Sure, the idiom is taken (given) in a rather casual way. It’s not like considering or calling another a *good egg* requires a criminal background check or other extensive evaluation; no, but almost always is based on some personal encounter or experience, the whole of it giving rise to such a complement, consideration.

There must be some sense to it however, that such an accolade is indeed the case, the person deserving of it on scale with their character⁶. Still, one’s character may change or be revealed on much more (or less) than what was thought before, previously, possibly lending to second-thoughts or worse, consternation, regret.

If you want to test a [person]’s character, give him *POWER*.⁷ Given *power*, what will a person do?

⁶ Character: the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual.

⁷ Abraham Lincoln.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Raise or lower the bar” is associated with track & field, of course, but is extended to other objectives, goals, etc.

One might say, “They’ve lowered the bar for entry,” suggesting a reduction to/of the qualifications or criteria, followed with dismay or delight depending on the cause, affect, etc.

John Maxwell, author, pastor, says, “I can’t raise the bar on others if I haven’t raised the bar for myself,” to suggest modeling must precede any such expectations or desires of others. After all, who appreciates or respects a hypocrite ⁸ or worse, any who expect or demand what is often quipped as *rules for thee but not for me*? Sadly, and more so, is that leadership and powers can do just that; they can impute requirements or obligations while, given their position, are exempt, excused, as exceptional.

Where does POWER and hypocrisy meet; the *doublemindedness*, falsehoods and fraud that stems from an abuse of power? But then, who is innocent of hypocrisy, saying one thing and doing another or imposing standards on others that they don’t intend to keep let alone reserve, respect?

To the extremes (of power) with ends beyond reason, is when crime to one (group) is modus operandi to another, as Noam Chomsky puts it, “For the powerful, crimes are those that others commit.” ⁹We generally hate or despise hypocrisy, rightfully so, though least of all in ourselves... [as such] wears a mask so often that his face grows to fit it. ¹⁰

⁸ Hypocrite: one whose actions or conduct contradicts what one claims to do, believe, or feel.

⁹ Noam Chomsky, *Imperial Ambitions: Conversations on the Post-9/11 World*.

¹⁰ George Orwell, *Shooting an Elephant*.

“Stand or cut & run” is analogous to *fight or flight*. To *take a stand* is associated with courage, integrity, or responsibility while to *cut & run* as possibly something less, maybe cowardness.

With what I’ve observed and possibly know of rabbits, each of these, to *stand or cut & run*, occurs with an additional action to simply freeze, or remain motionless. Adult rabbits will fight each other but as to a perceived predator or danger, will seldom if ever fight, choosing instead to either freeze or take flight using their agility to outmaneuver if not outpace any pursuits.

Thinking of a film about Martin Luther, about humans, I much favor what the character Frederick the Wise had to say on the subject:

...there are two ways of saying 'no' to someone you believe to be stronger (more powerful) than yourself.

The first is to say nothing and go on merely doing what you were doing before, and pretend that you never heard, allow time and inertia to be your allies. And the second is to say 'no' in such a kind and thoughtful way it befuddles them. Naturally, if both these strategies fail, there is nothing but to relent. Or... to fight! And of course, if you decide to fight, you also have to decide to win....¹¹

And why and how one reacts to a real or perceived threat is relative of course, as one encounter or experience does not determine or predict another. An action-reaction is predicted on much it seems¹² but in the finality of it all is a basic nature or instinct to survive. To *cut & run* is not always cowardly and nor *to stand*, courageous, but in the first, one can be smart while in the other, *to stand*, stubborn if not stupid.

¹¹ Peter Ustinov: Frederick the Wise, Luther (2003).

¹² From Wikipedia: Fight-or-flight response,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fight-or-flight_response.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Crossing the line” as having some relation to the previous, is an encroachment on some implicit or explicit limits or bounds however determined, understood, respected. One says to another, “You’ve crossed the line,” as expressively *taking a stand* if just to make it known, with or without a consequence.

Obviously *crossing the line* is relative too, possibly in more ways than one. First, the line is subject to move, *raising or lower the bar*, with or without the awareness, the understanding of others. Second, and in keeping with the first, is that the so-called “line” may not hold true for everyone—or anyone—which not only adds possible uncertainty but is arbitrary, without criteria, principle, or reason.

How does one *cross the line* if they don’t know what or where *the line* is or, worse yet, that there is a *line* at all? Or if *the line* is apparent, even accepted, that consequences are unclear, uncertain as with arbitrary law? ¹³ One may violate a law but without any prior knowledge of the law! Sure, anyone can plead ignorance but does it even matter given such law?

Without a firm, solid *line*, what is to become of those who unwittingly violate..., or are innocent but are condemned anyway?

But where there is arbitrary law, expedience is often the course and thus “facts” are more the opinion of those in POWER, both the definition and the details, and the decision of guilt is in essence predetermined, in effect decreed by the dictates of those that fit the profile of tyrant ¹⁴.

¹³ Arbitrary law: based on individual discretion rather than a fair application of the law. ... As a result, a judge cannot act in disregard of the evidence or ignore established precedent.

¹⁴ Tyrant: a ruler who exercises arbitrary law beyond the scope permitted by constitution...with a view toward maintaining and/or increasing their power.

“Can I believe (my eyes)” is an idiom similarly ask as: “Can you believe it,” or more as a reaction, statement, “This can’t be real!” Such doubt or disbelief is not limited to the eyes only, but at times to what we hear or read, to leave us befuddled, bemused, or beguiled.

One may see or sense something dazzling, to have it or to be taken by it, with it. On the other end is perhaps the horror of something heinous, gruesome, and grotesque. And then there is all the in-betweens that run the gamut of good and evil, right, and wrong, pleasure and pain whether weak or strong. Yes, each is enthralled in (or with) such sights and sounds whether frozen in fear or drawn by desire, consciously or otherwise asking the question, “Can I believe (it),” against any sense of what is real and what is not.

How often however does one really look or really listen beyond a peep or a passing-by? How much critical thinking, cautious and credulous, do we each do in a minute, in a month, or more? One might guess that the matter, whatever it happens to be, is basically of no import (to them), so what’s the point of probing, pondering, or otherwise paying any time and attention to this, that, or them?

Then more, *looking into it* may be *asking for trouble* or at least something less than the bliss of ignorance, the excuse of innocence. How much easier it may initially appear to simply pass-it-on-by and give it *nary a thought* only to subsequently, *with clinched fist and gnashing of teeth*, realize with regret, “What a fool I have been,” seeing but then not believing it (all) real, relevant, and raw.

*First, they came for them...then them, and each time I said (or did) nothing, and then they came for me—and it was too late.*¹⁵

¹⁵ Adapted from German Lutheran pastor Martin Niemöller (1892–1984).

Pondering on points of POWER

“Come to think of it” is one that reminds me of a dated TV ad, “Come to think of it, I’ll have a Heineken.” It may not take much thought to get (or want) a beer but takes much to think critically ¹⁶.

One may settle for just a beer but prefer a particular brand, brew. Similarly, one may stop at a thought or a few moments of thinking but on some special occasion to study a matter, taking a *deep dive* into the depths, searching, and exploring for *treasures* that collectively support some belief or forethought lending to a position.

There are POWERS at work that prefer—and indeed plan—for your brand to be diluted as merely alcohol that dulls your thinking without the *full body* and rich taste of a well-crafted beer. They, these powers, aim to thwart critical thinking that may expose their presence, purpose, and plan(s), their motives, means and methods. There is power in the unseen, invisible...*the shadows*.

When on occasion such powers are mentioned or presented, *the shadows* play tricks on your imagination, your interests—however vivid the one and viable the other. They, these powers, want us each bland for a particular brand or for critical thought, but rather consumed in/by our base desires, diluted and demented devoid of any substance, without any care for community and culture.

It might be pleasant just to give up, live in the present, enjoying existential personal experiences, living like lotus-eaters from our amazing productive system, without personal responsibility, self-discipline, or thought about the future.¹⁷

Come to think of it, there is power in the great delusion, diversions, and deceptions.

¹⁶ I use “thought to think” as for critical thinking, a *spark to start the fire*. Critical thinking: the objective analysis and evaluation of an issue to form a judgment.

¹⁷ Carroll Quigley, *Tragedy & Hope*, p. 1275.

“Fly in the ointment” is not one you hear much these days, much as *poisoning the well*, though the first is a more about a petty spoiler (to otherwise a success) and the latter is a preemptive measure aimed to discredit or undermine something, someone ¹⁸.

A menacing *fly* is bad enough but once *in the ointment*, the matter is at least thwarted, tainted, *a bad taste* let alone *stomaching.... Poisoning the well* is, more so, planned, purposed, going beyond inconvenience to a major issue, setback, or *full stop*. You *can stomach a fly*, but *poison* can *do you in*—which may be the point!

Thought there is that aggravation that arrives with a buzzing fly, roving randomly about and landing on or in that favorite dish or desert. There is something psychological in a fly floating on the surface or worse, foraging its way beneath..., the rancid smell and riled site of rot, the dance of maggots that feast on the dead tissues.

But who knows whether or where *a fly in the ointment* comes from and more, who is *poisoning the well*? There is POWER in clandestine acts. menacing, maniacal, morbid, and then more (power) left undetected, unidentified, and unaccounted. And for

those who make themselves our enemy are advancing around the globe...no war ever posed a greater threat to our security. [] I can only say that the danger has never been clearer, and its presence has never been more imminent.... We are opposed around the world by a monolithic and ruthless conspiracy that relies primarily on covert means for expanding its sphere of influence—on infiltration instead of invasion, on subversion instead of elections, ¹⁹

¹⁸ Poisoning the well: an informal fallacy where adverse information is preemptively presented with the intention of discrediting or ridiculing something said. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poisoning_the_well.

¹⁹ John F. Kennedy.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Who’s the backroom boys” is another of a bygone era, perhaps limited to England, but nevertheless timeless given *the back office*, that sometimes described and directed as the *brain behind the brawn*, the “war room”, the brain trust or the intelligentsia. But really, who are what are they?

In the origin of this idiom is evidence that the “the backroom boys” are *visible*, apparent; that as a group or institution, they function in a capacity similar *as advertised* or disclosed. But here, the meaning of *backroom* is broadened, considering what is sometimes described as “the man behind the curtain”, the secret, subversive *deep state*, the *shadow government*.

In his book, *The Party is Over*, author Mike Lofgren²⁰, describes our *backroom boys*:

I have come to call this *shadow government* the *Deep State*...a hybrid association of key elements of government and parts of top-level finance and industry that is effectively able to govern the United States with only limited reference to the consent of the governed as normally expressed through elections.

...

The Deep State is the big story of our time. It is the red thread that runs through the war on terrorism and the militarization of foreign policy, the financialization and deindustrialization of the American economy, the rise of a plutocratic social structure that has given us the most unequal society in almost a century, and the political dysfunction that has paralyzed day.

²⁰ Mike Lofgren: an American author and a former Republican U.S. Congressional aide. He retired in May 2011 after 28 years as a Congressional staff member. His writings, critical of politics... published after his retirement and garnered widespread attention.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mike_Lofgren.

“Buying time...buffer zone” is a merger of two, the first to delay and the second perhaps has its roots in the military, an area of separation between antagonistic armies.

When one says, “I am *buying time*...,” they’re purposely putting-off something presumably for some advantage or condition as time affords, changes occur. As an example of this, *buying time*, refer to “Stand or cut & run” (p. 4), where Frederick the Wise describes dealing with someone you believe to be stronger.

Buffer zone is a possible advantage usually represented as space or physical distance (rather than time), the agreeable “zone” as somewhat a neutral, protected area, strategic to some cause, ostensibly for an overall good—if that is possible in war and the like.

I remember as a boy on a day trip, passing between one state and another, an apparent area between each states’ signage described to me as “no man’s land”. and this as a possibility that Georgia and South Carolina had a buffer zone, a moment *in the zone*.

Picking up on Frederick the Wise, his comments in “Stand or cut & run”, *buying time...buffer zone* are but two ways to possibly succeed or survive in the face of daunting POWERS:

1. Delay, counting on time to enable *change for the better*
2. Distance yourself despite any mutual agreement

And in the later of the two, the distance might be physical, but also emotional, to *draw a line, cut them off* or at least lessen another’s incessant, possessive, or obsessive effort to control, manipulate²¹, and to *own you*.

²¹ From *Exposing Manipulation*, Dr. Rodney Pearson: the main force behind manipulation is power. Power over people. Power over circumstances, Power over your future. (p. 13).

Pondering on points of POWER

“Turn or turned aside” means: to deflect something; to direct or divert something away (e.g., The president turned aside questions about his involvement with the company and changed the subject to matters of foreign policy.)²²

One can *turn* or be *turned*, shift, be shifted (or even *shafted*), control or be controlled. In the example applied above, questions are averted, possibly to avoid further implication and in some aspect, POWER obstructs justice or at least inquiry...investigative reporting.

One possibility or outcome of such a turn, shift or control is obstruction of justice while another is merely *a day's work* sprinkled with some reason(s) or cause, worthy or not. What is true is yet to be confirmed given the *turn or turned aside* endemic to and characteristic of *corridors of power*.

Sure, we all lie or withhold information, but for the powerless such measures or methods do not fare well simply because one is outmatched, *the tables turned* against them.

Consider, as another example, the *plea bargain*, the method of prosecution whereby the witness or defendant *enters a plea of* either *no contest* or *guilty*. Contrast the *plea bargain* with *due process*:

Due process means that we knew before we violated the law that the government would prosecute...and that we had a fair trial before a neutral judge and jury.²³

In or with the *plea bargain*, any trial or jury is forfeited; that is, adjudication occurs without *due process*; hence, the prosecution is certain to render guilt simply by compelling the defendant to plead—which in principle is a violation of the Fifth Amendment.

²² The Free Dictionary by Farlex.

²³ *Lies the Government Told You*, Judge Andrew Napolitano, (p. 20)

“**Out of hand**” means out-of-control, or some action without any or enough forethought. *Out of hand* is somewhat like *crossing the line*, though the first includes matters while the second pertains to persons only.

One that overspends or mismanages finances might be considered as *out of hand*, their spending habits, but if these habits *go to far* then the one may have *crossed the line*.

In terms of debt as a measure of mismanagement—even maleficence—our nation has exceeded all other nations, past and present in nominal debt.²⁴ Accepting that public debt is the burden of the public, the grim reality is that every citizen is in some way liable for it; that is, that we are a debtor nation, each and all laden with potential, untenable peonage.²⁵

Where all the spending occurs is a problem of vast proportions simply because so much of it is “black budget” or otherwise undisclosed or publicized, while the balance is packed with *pork* often as *pet projects* of government officials and their patrons.

Herbert Hoover said, “Blessed are the young, for they shall inherit the national debt,” but with government’s spending long *out of hand*, the young will not only inherit burden but as well the externalities and eventualities of maleficence.

As to such spending (habits) *crossing the line*, the certainty that the POWERS will keep *moving the line* or as aptly put, *keep kicking the can down the road*, cannibalizing *the commons* along the way.

²⁴ This status does not consider the common ratio of debt to GDP but rather, and simply, the total dominated or nominal debt.

²⁵ **Peonage**, also called debt slavery or debt servitude, is a system where an employer compels a worker to pay off a debt with work. Legally, peonage was outlawed by Congress in 1867.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Down the rabbit hole” is more the metaphor, the meaning of which is something that transports someone into a wonderfully (or troublingly) surreal state or situation.²⁶ The meaning may have changed somewhat in the advent of the Internet; the revised...as to spend too much time *sucked* into some topic or reading, a trap or more, an addiction if carried too far.

One might hope that, as with Alice, a rabbit hole exists in *times of trouble*, an escape from some problem or predicament. If/as *the rabbit hole* represents the modern meaning however, the outcome or conclusion is more likely a waste of time, deception or diversion, any coinciding disappointment perhaps the least of one's problems.

Spurred on by Edward Bernays, *the Father of Propaganda*, but certainly present for as long as information has existed, is that facts and truths can be *turned aside*, discounted, and dismissed, while falsehoods and fraud flourish. There is POWER in information, the *manufacturing of consent*²⁷ using the processes and craft of propaganda in this age of information.

The picture of the world that's presented to the public has only the remotest relation to reality. The truth of the matter is buried under edifice after edifice of lies upon lies.

...

The mass media serve as a system for communicating messages and symbols to the general populace. It is their function to amuse, entertain, and inform, and to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behavior that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society.

²⁶ Originating from Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland*.

²⁷ *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, Edward S. Herman, Noam Chomsky.

“Or the rabbit trail” is but the first step toward the rabbit hole, so one must first venture down the trail before possibly setting-off any trap(s), problems, pains, or pleasures.

Rabbits are speedy, sleek, and stealth, and thus to follow one is next to impossible unless a dog trained and skilled in such, able to circle the rabbit, possibly in place until the hunters arrive.

If you've ever seen a dog follow a real rabbit trail in a field or someone's back yard, you'll see where this idiom comes from. The dog will endlessly sniff around in circles, never getting anywhere, [it seems].²⁸

Here however, and obviously with some relation to the *rabbit hole*, is an adventure, some exploration without a certain or defined end (except for *the hole*, heaven forbid), but more for the sake of the adventure itself.

And while such an adventure may seem impulsive or rash, one going here and there, tracking, backtracking, moving in circles much as the rabbit dog, it's feverish flight. Yet, there is some *method to the madness* rooted in the natural or nurtured, rendering flight to behold. If it was (is) *helter-skelter*, no skill or otherwise chance of a catch whatsoever, then what would be the point of the hunt, the pursuit? And if you go chasing rabbits,

And you know you're going to fall...When the men on the chessboard, get up and tell you where to go...When logic and proportion...have fallen sloppy dead...feed your head.²⁹

But if you go chasing rabbits, remember that *the rabbit trail* is their highway and the *rabbit hole*, their home.

²⁸ <http://andtodaysidiomis.blogspot.com/2010/12/rabbit-trail.html>.

²⁹ Jefferson Airplane, lyrics from “White Rabbit”.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Bang for the buck” is simply to get satisfaction from effort such as a purchase. First used in relation to U.S. military, the underlying benefit was strategic advantage with advanced weapons with the potential to deter an existential threat. But more recently our military has adopted the term *Full Spectrum Dominance*,³⁰ the aim supported by leading edge technology with all the complexities of integration across military branches and battle groups—that unlike at any time in known history, dominance extends beyond regions, apparently on a global scale extending to space, the outer reaches.

As of 2020, the U.S. spends more on military than the combined spending of the next ten top militaries, their nation states, and while this dollar figure is quantified it nevertheless does not consider the U.S. *black budget*³¹ or other undisclosed spending.

Whether *dominance* has been attained or is an eventuality is beyond this writing, but what is at stake is much more than the excessive spending in such aims, as Chalmers Johnson³² described some years ago:

...the U.S. will probably maintain a façade of constitutional government and drift along until financial bankruptcy overtake it.

³⁰ From Wikipedia, *Full Spectrum Dominance* is a military entity's control over all dimensions of the battlespace, effectively possessing an overwhelming diversity of resources as in terrestrial, aerial, maritime, subterranean, extraterrestrial, psychological, bio- and cyber technology.

³¹ The *black budget* is not published for security reasons and thus not quantified.

³² Chalmers Johnson was a political scientist and U.S. veteran. His books include *Blowback, the Costs and Consequences of American Empire*; *The Sorrows of Empire*; *Nemesis: The Last Days of the American Empire*.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“Paying lip service” is an insincere expression of words without action, which can range from disingenuous to deceit and is often applied in a political context, *all show, no action*.

In *The laws of Human Nature*, Robert Greene addresses occurrence or cause of the irrationality called “the group effect” ³³. He writes:

Be aware of demagogues who exploit the group effect and stimulate breaks of irrationality....

Demagogues in politics or the media try to stir a continual sense of panic, urgency, and outrage. They must keep the emotional levels high....

They rely on vague but loaded words full of emotive quality....

They talk of abstract, noble goals rather than the solving of specific problems with concrete action. ³⁴

We’ve all seen them, heard them and been *taken-in* by them, their *paying lip service* whether an actual demagogue or some other public figure. Greene warns, “When you feel you are in the presence of a demagogue, become doubly weary and analytical.” Understand that such *bags of wind* are merely *playing the game*, using words underwritten by POWER to *win you over*, to deceive and distract you, and to *play you the fool*. Even worse are those who compel you to compromise your morals or ethics for something as magnanimous as *the greater good* or *the public’s interest*. Yes, be weary but aware....

³³ **The group effect** or *group bias* limits or alters one’s reasoning; it causes an exhilarating affect in or through the presence or influence of groups. It is how we are rallied to do something for *the collective* or *greater good* and is especially exploited in matters of public opinion, the media, and politics.

³⁴ Greene, p. 36.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Two peas in a pod” simply means that the two (or more) are practically inseparable, possibly *cut from the same cloth* or similar, or, as my brother use to say as yet one more of the same, “Like two burrs on a mule’s tail.” *Six, one half dozen or the other*, these idioms suggest a bond, like-minded or otherwise, identical for all intents and purposes.

All in all, this appearance or perception is not bad, not wrong or anything of the kind, but then the possibility of conformance per *group bias* or by any other means or method, the pressures to conform with *the collective* and/or some *political-correct* persona or personality, begging the most general of questions, “Why?”

Why should each think or believe as all (or at least the apparent majority)? Why should a person forfeit their individuality for the *common good*—as expressed by any other name? Why should I be you or we be they, them?

Because when/as one accepts and embraces such notions, so called “unanimity”, they are free from choice, individual decision, and everything else that encumbers the mind, the heart, the soul and the spirit of the one—relieved by the casual convenience and cameo comradery of the promoted public, the mass, the popular position. Doris Lessing³⁵ suggested,

Those of you who are more robust and individual than others will be encouraged to leave and find ways of educating yourself—educating your own judgements. Those that stay must remember, always, and all the time, that they are being molded and patterned to fit into the narrow and particular needs of this particular society.

³⁵ Doris Lessing, *The Golden Book*.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“**Fanning the flames**” is like *putting fuel on the fire* or setting a torch to it; it is making it (sure) to happen with or without nature and more, to add to a problem, a stage a bad situation or worse, to further incense an already angry person.³⁶

How intense the *flames fanned* in the *public square* as ignited *behind the scenes*; an actual problem is escalated (presumably for nefarious reasons), or a crisis is altogether created to incite fear as *soft power*?³⁷

Soft POWER is not always soft in the effect but depending on the intended or desired *end*—in combination with other *goings-on* and *hidden-behinds*—can or will be a *force de tour* however it appears or is perceived.

On this practice of *setting a fire* and then fueling it to an inferno, Andrew Bacevich³⁸ writes in *Breach of Trust: How Americans Failed Their Soldiers and Their Country*, “If you will the end, you must will the means,” and make the flames are *higher, burn, burn, burn*.

³⁶ The Free Dictionary by Farlex.

³⁷ From Wikipedia, **Soft power** is the ability to attract and co-opt, rather than coerce (contrast hard power). In other words, soft power involves shaping the preferences of others through appeal and attraction. A defining feature of soft power is that it is non-coercive; the currency of soft power includes culture, political values, and foreign policies.

³⁸ **Andrew Bacevich** is a professor of history and international relations at Boston University, retired from the U.S. Army with the rank of colonel. He is the author of *Washington Rules: America's Path to Permanent War* and *The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism and The New American Militarism*. His writing has appeared in *Foreign Affairs*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The Nation*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. He holds a Ph.D. in American Diplomatic History from Princeton University, and taught at West Point and Johns Hopkins University prior to joining the faculty at Boston University in 1998.

Pondering on points of POWER

“A hard nut...” is the first part of a *hard nut to crack*; and it means a difficult, daunting effort to understand another who is a veritable enigma.

We’ve likely come across some of these persons; those who are *par excellent* and shielding their “true self”, hiding and disguised. It is one thing to fail to recognize an acquaintance wearing a mask, but another who is entirely hidden, their personality...or who they really are.

Anyone who has ever shelled pecans knows how tedious it can be using a basic tool or your hands only, but there are still tougher nuts, literally and figuratively. Yes, the tough ones are stubborn to the point of discouraging the effort never mind the pleasing, fresh taste.

Many years ago, my brother planted a tree from a seed in our parents’ yard and with a few passing decades, *the thing* grew to an enormous size, strength—much to much for their liking expressed on occasion to him.

Powerful is a seed, as to yield all that is our plant life and then creation, but more powerful is that which can decimate the plants and all living things in the blink of an eye, leaving a wake, a swath of immediate destruction and then, the aftereffects for generations to come.

Much of my early career was spent working with two of the most toxic chemicals ever discovered, dioxin and aflatoxin. I initially worked at MIT.... After two and a half years, I helped discover dioxin, arguably the most toxic chemical ever found...Agent Orange, then being used to defoliate forests in the Vietnam War.³⁹

³⁹ T. Colin Campbell, *The China Study: The Most Comprehensive Study of Nutrition Ever Conducted and the Startling Implications for Diet, Weight Loss, and Long-term Health*.

“...**To crack**” is the back-half of the idiom, making *the nut* a nut. And speaking of nuts, think about the craziness going on all around, and with that, the fitting title of the film, *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*.⁴⁰

But the meaning of “crack”, more “cracked”, can be one who is a *crack* shot or marksmen, or one who is *cracked-up*, crazy, *one step short away from the loony bin*, *missing a few marbles*, or as with another film of the same decade, *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*.⁴¹

In this age of modern science, one might be deemed *cracked-up* and yet be as mentally sound as possible by qualified professions. The problem of misjudging, more misrepresenting, is seemingly that for the “patient”, the personality of those singled-out, trapped in a system where mental health status is determined by systems unqualified and more, predisposed to see them *undone*. Indeed, politics and its interest trump the medical professions and with degrees of pressure and other points of influence essentially make such medical status self-fulfilling—based merely on inuendo. unsubstantiated claims, and pretense. It is not what you are but instead what they say you are. In the second of these two noted films is originating book by the same title, written by Ken Kesey,⁴² who says, “But it's the truth even if it didn't happen.”

⁴⁰ *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* is a 1963 American comedy film produced and directed by Stanley Kramer with a screenplay by William Rose and Tania Rose from a story by Tania Rose.

⁴¹ *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* is a (is a novel written by Ken Kesey. Set in an Oregon psychiatric hospital, the narrative serves as a study of institutional processes and the human mind as well as a critique of psychiatry and a tribute to individualistic principles.

⁴² Ken Kesey was an American novelist, essayist, and countercultural figure.

Pondering on points of POWER

"They turn against us" is similar to the "turn or turn aside" expression, but in this case, in opposition, not some other angle.

It is painful to lose a friend or one no longer trusted either way but more when a once-thought-friend is seemingly an enemy, beset on hurting—even crushing—the other. Forgiveness is always the best policy and practice, even when the hurt keeps hurting or the "one beset" keeps *bringing it on*, relentless as they may be (are) turned against you. And atop such acts or actions is any initial and then besetting of the fool, naïve or anything other belittling. "Why did I ever trust them," the one might wonder wistfully.

"It was a mistake," you said. But the cruel thing was, it felt like the mistake was mine, for trusting you.⁴³ And this "mistake" might be rooted or fertilized by their vitriol—their direct or indirect message that you are to blame, it is your fault—turning the affair against you while adding insult to injury.

In this possibility, a perpetual problem, lies the likelihood that they may never change for the better; that is, their behavior may continue or may intensify should the two of you have any connection or necessary associations as like a festering, infected wound. And such...are hard lessons (or can be) for our wellness though *a hard pill to swallow*; the experience of betrayal of once-trusted persons who may be liars, even cheaters and thieves—the three often coinciding.

And what is such "love" that abuses trust? An angle appearing to be aligned though set in the opposite direction amid denial, deception, disregard, and disdain; it is force, the abuse of POWER, that supersedes love with contempt toward the other as well as oneself, and cares not the consequences, a loss in every direction.

⁴³ David Levithan, *The Lover's Dictionary*.

“Fight tooth & nail” is to fight fiercely or with all your resources and capacity.

To fight is force in some form preferably with intention to win or, in the most extremes, die trying. Even love is a *fight*, marked by passion, fiercely or with all your resources—though aimed for the benefit of more than oneself, more than singular good or benefit.

The fight may be futile, as even the love is unrequited or undone by you, them, or another. One can be lovesick—a figurative causality of the fight—and still be up to more, taking on the experience and essence of love—which is self-sacrifice, even suffering, for the perceived good of them or another.

Jesus said, “Greater love has no one this this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” ⁴⁴

And again, love is force that is intended for good presuming a good heart, good-hearted. ⁴⁵ But if not good-hearted, rather dark-hearted ⁴⁶, what then of love or more important, trust? Can a dark-hearted person be trusted, trust? No, they can’t...but they sure as Hell exert force, *fight tooth & nail*, a fierceness fueled by (and using) fear made manifest passively or aggressively.

The dark-hearted do not necessarily *show their true colors* but often, and as further advantage, pose as well-intended, with glib words of “friend” and “love”, all the while consciously or subconsciously working on exclusively their own behalf, having an appearance or perception of good but dark, donning the POWERS of denial, deception, division, disregard, and disdain. This sort is dangerous beyond discrimination.

⁴⁴ John 15:13 (NIV).

⁴⁵ **Good-hearted:** kind or generous, sympathetic, understanding.

⁴⁶ **Dark-hearted:** someone or something seen as innately evil, corrupt.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Call it duty...” is the first of two halves (as with “hard nut to crack”), with concentration on the force, “duty”. And thinking of this word, the saying that comes to mind, often applied in a British setting, is “Do your duty,”⁴⁷

What then is your duty; what is it that you’re expected or required to do? Is it to serve your country, your company or employer, your family and friends, someone, or something else? After all, *you’ve got to serve somebody*⁴⁸, right?

But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes.
Indeed, you're gonna have to serve somebody.
Well, it may be the devil, or it may be the Lord,
But you're gonna have to serve somebody,

Sure, we each should understand and even embrace the fact that we *gotta serve somebody*, the question(s) of course as who or what?

Some might often just serve their self, one’s own interest as with *the state* (that always acts in its interests)—as an institutionalized form (in lieu of our individual soul and spirit). On the other side are some who might serve others, even self-sacrificing and suffering, as the presence, personification of love, not fear, with trust. Though it sounds ironic, those who serve others consequently serve themselves well, putting to action the good works of a good heart to preferably a good cause, and lending to the truism that to serve or be-of-service is our very best—not as call to duty but as an expression of love, as “service is born out love, not duty.”⁴⁹ Serve then because of love if just of yourself.

⁴⁷ “Do you duty”: to undertake that which is expected or required from one.

⁴⁸ Thinking of Bob Dylan’s song, “Gotta Serve Somebody”.

⁴⁹ Todd Stocker, *Leading from The Gut: 3 Power Principles of Effective Leaders*.

“**...Or a Herculean task**” as the back half of “call it duty”, the idea that if not duty—doing one’s duty—then it’s herculean.⁵⁰ But who is to say or believe that even if one does their so-called duty, that it will be easy, easier, than it otherwise would or will be? Even service to (or for) something that one knows is dishonorable—even degrading—demands effort, more even than that of a “good” cause or reason.

Some may serve as more than a duty but per demands of some power or authority or otherwise under compulsion, coercion, and that sort. They or these are servants of the lowest forms, slaves perhaps, but seemingly sold-out, full of fears of what might happen if they refuse or more, oppose. Their duty is to survive if/as that’s possible and perhaps *live for another day*.

Others serve somewhere *in the gray*, between the black of demands-death and the white of love-life, doing it—whatever “it” is—out of some combined but contradictory sense of commitment and obligation, *making good* on oaths, promises made and such.

Still others serve because they love, to be loved and to love in return, but still involving problems, pains, and pleasures. It’s not that their service is free from their own needs—even wants at times—but that they hold to *their word*. Yes, they place such words and the commensurate actions above the worthiness of the cause, any appreciation of those they serve and many other otherwise motivations beyond (or beneath) love, with passion and power.

A life not lived for others is not a life.⁵¹

⁵⁰ **Herculean**: requiring great strength or effort.

⁵¹ Mother Teresa.

“Life a bunch of lemons...” is once again one of two halves, as: *when life gives you lemons, make lemonade.*⁵² And of the many idioms presented herein, this is one that I recall from high school, a poster showing some caricature showered with lemons but then dispensing lemonade via one or more of his facial orifices.

Unlike a similar phrase popularized by Forest Gump, “Life is like a box of chocolates—you never know what you’re going to get,” the difference is that any or all lemons are bad—not a scrumptious morsel among them. In this certainty of the bad, lemons in volumes, is the apparent possibility to *make good things happen*, to *pull a rabbit out of the hat* or generally to proceed and produce the improbable if not impossible given lemons symbolic of bad.

Can life be exclusively “a bunch of lemons?” Is there any good with the bad or even *good* that comes from (out of) *bad*? And more is that we (each) mistake one for the other, misidentifying, misinterpreting events, experiences? Still more is the reliability or integrity of information (sources) whether public or private—the premise, presence of so-called “fake news” (pretense, propaganda, and poppycock) proven, present and prevailing.

With the *information age* came (or comes) exponential growth in *pouring out of lemons*, the purposed decimating of the misleading, misinformation, and messaging. And while there is much power in control and censorship, there is more to gain in the effects, the *manufacturing of consent*, compliance, and conformity.

⁵² From Wikipedia, when life gives you lemons, make lemonade is a proverbial phrase used to encourage optimism and a positive can-do attitude in the face of adversity or misfortune. Lemons suggest sourness or difficulty in life; making lemonade is turning them into something positive or desirable.

“...Or it is lemonade” to follow on another of the other, back half *when life gives you lemons, make lemonade*; that when you’re given or encumber something seemingly bad, it might turn out good or for the better. Can you think of any personal examples?

One’s idea of a good or bad event or experience may change overtime, and with introspection/retrospection, may change their thinking, reconsidering in view of more information, maturity, and consequences. Someone remarks on such *change* by saying, “I was deeply disappointed at the time but later realized it was for the better.” Changes in their thinking may then change their heart going so far as to making their life better—not bitter or bound by the past.

We each have read or are otherwise are familiar with persons of this kind; those that endured a real tragedy, a major setback or handicap, or some other life-changing event, experience. And as is sometimes called-on or conjured-up in such is that *what doesn’t kill you makes you stronger*.⁵³ But if so, surviving and then succeeding to be stronger, in what ways and by what means? How does one work through and overcome...., sometimes more than once, a series of things related or not? Can you snatch victory from defeat?

A “survivor”, then or now striving, considers the prior questions, the matter, with or without any sense of *how they made it*, all that led to the outcome as it is, was. One may arrive in some approximation that it was fate or their faith, their will, and/or others that supported, *stood by them* or *was there*, whatever the conditions, the costs. There is power, strength, in realizing, accepting, and acknowledging that the outcome is not solely our own,

⁵³ Attributed to the German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Turning topsy-turvy...” is another of “turn” type idioms, but here to describe an inversion (to be inverted) rendering possible confusion, chaos, and even contention and conflict.

We live in *topsy-turvy* days, a turning of intense velocity and acceleration; the world is in flux regarding the events leading to a world government—all that has and will be *taken down* in the days to come.

One might say “We’ve been here (or there) before (regarding history repeating itself),” another *turning* ⁵⁴ that are traced, tracked as cycles, commonality, extended over the ages.

There is at least one significant difference now, in this technological age, that according to Maurice Latey ⁵⁵ enables both tyranny and totalitarianism to coexist under the same regime.

In a world of rapid technological advancement, there is a chronic instability and inflation...lends to that constant insecurity which sends men scurrying under the wings father figures, leaders of dictators, while the collapse of traditional moral values and the conflict of values makes them crave the world of command.

The world is ripe (whether ready...) for a world order; that is, conditions that have never been more conducive for such, all prior *turnings aside*, and all capabilities and capacities considered.

In such times, the age present and to come, is (will be) more *topsy-turvy*, chaos, confusion, conditioning, and conformity/compliance. Perhaps then in closing, a comment/question, “I accept chaos, but I’m not sure whether it accepts me.” ⁵⁶

⁵⁴ *Turning* eluding to generational theory; a theorized recurring generation cycle in American history and global history.

⁵⁵ Maurice Latey, author of *Tyranny: A Study In The Abuse Of Power*.

⁵⁶ Bob Dylan.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“...Or is it already turned” as to question whether the world is already governed by a central, common order (that the apparent or interpreted *topsy-turvy* is merely noise, deceit, distraction, delusion).

In another book from a similar era (as Latey’s *Tyranny, None Dare Call It Conspiracy*)⁵⁷ there are institutions of enormous financial, economic, and political power—not elected but significant even so, working *behind the scenes* in national and international matters. Stemming from the 18th century, such organizations have been instrumental in instigating and fomenting conflict and contention for their own interests. From *None Dare Call It Conspiracy*,

It should be noted that the originator of this type of secret society was Adam Weishaupt, the monster who founded the Order of the Illuminati on May 1, 1776, for the purpose of conspiracy to control the world. The role...is such horrors as the Reign of Terror is unquestioned, and the techniques...have been recognized as models for Communist methodology. He (Weishaupt) also used the structure of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) as his model and rewrote his code in Mesonic terms.

As to all that ensued from that noted, the end effect is to control the world, thus rendering all nations and their presumed sovereignty as less than apparent, this central, concentrated power in charge

One might wonder, worry, on (or of) such organizations whatever the descriptions associated (i.e., *deep state*, secret societies, etc.): Council of Foreign Relations (CFR), International Monetary Fund (IMF), Trilateral Commission, World Health Organization, etc.

Still, one should be reassured that God is sovereign, *setting up kings and deposing them...giving knowledge to the discerning*.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ *None Dare Call It Conspiracy*, authored by Gary Allen,

⁵⁸ Daniel 2: 21.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Old school**” may be more a phrase or type than an idiom, but the description relates to convention, tradition or some possible practices of a bygone era, generation.

Often, *old school* is applied in the derogatory, someone passe—*behind the times*, a veritable dinosaur—or at the least as those whose thinking and actions are inconsiderate, irrelevant, or inapplicable.

If/as *old school* is old, not just old fashioned, what is *now*, relevant to the times, the future? And if *history repeats itself* in some degree, is so-called “old school” behind us, of no value other than nostalgia or can (should) we expect it to come around, again?

In truth, the lives/lifestyles of past generations, their thinking, and actions, remain vitally important to our future, the passing-on of experience and wisdom of what happened, why and how. For what is forgotten, altered, or abolished in remembrances and resolutions of past and worse, as initiatives or movements to forget any parts of our past, is a *clear and present danger* to culture, a *telltale* of a faltering, failing society.

Every record has been destroyed or falsified, every book rewritten, every picture has been repainted, every statue and street building has been renamed, every date has been altered. And the process is continuing day by day and minute by minute. History has stopped. Nothing exists except an endless present in which the Party is always right.⁵⁹

Those that (or desire to) forget are set to repeat, not just doomed to repeat it, but doomed. Can the elimination of all references to slavery from early America have any positive effect on the international slave trade today? Can a promotion that lives matter succeed when millions are systematically killed before birth?

⁵⁹ George Orwell, 1984.

What is an “**Old fart**”? It is (they are) a contemptible, tiresome person(s), especially *old school*, obstinate, offensive, and obtuse,

“He’s an *old fart*,” one comments after hearing of (about or from...) “it” generally older. But then, what does it take to be an *old fart* but a glib remark, not intended as an insult but more an idiom of sort—just as guy or geezer, a cad or curmudgeon.

Old farts don’t necessarily smell foul but do make their presence known, not necessarily as anti-social or *removed* but by a sometimes vagary, vanity, or vulgarity—not vile and most assuredly not vogue.

It may seem an insult to refer to another as “fart”, but then such a personality hardly cares, their role as leaning toward the recalcitrant and, with or without a *movement*, some possible raw and rude remarks, their response or reply somewhat self-fulfilling.

Taking a few more literal on (and possibly by) “fart”, first Kurt Vonnegut, who suggest, “We are here on Earth to fart-round, and don’t let anybody tell you different.”

Then another, more on the *near-movement* side, courtesy of Matthew Wineman: “Don’t be ashamed to fart while you urinate.... [as] there is no rain without thunder.”

And not to be outdone by a very *old fart*, Benjamin Franklin, with a proclamation of sort that I dedicate to my maternal grandad.

Let every fart count as a peal of thunder for liberty.

Let every fart remind the nations of how much it has let pass out of its control. It is a small gesture, but one that can be very effective—especially in a large crowd.

Fart, and if you must, fart often, but always fart without apology. Fart for freedom, fart for liberty—and fart proudly.

At the least, fart to blow-off the blowhard and send ruining any *whose shit don’t stink*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Bite off a head...**” or perhaps more often heard as, “He really bit-off your head,” to mean yelled or snapped at, unconstructively criticized in a rash, impulsive, inexplicable, unprovoked, and forceful way. Other similar idioms include:

- *Jaw one down*
- *Ram into (someone)*
- *(Come down with) An iron hand.*

No doubt that any adult has endured such treatment whomever or whatever applied such force.

It is one thing to *lose your head* momentarily and figuratively and another to really lose it, beheaded—as morbid the possibility, the practice in some periods of history. There were times when such punishment did happen as with The French Revolution, and Reign of Terror as an example.⁶⁰ As to *the reign*, Charles Dickens writes in *A Tale of Two Cities*, “Liberty, equality, fraternity, or death; the last, much the easiest to bestow, O Guillotine!” As to the *revolution*, Jon Adams from *The Adams-Jefferson Letters*, *rooting-out* the cause:

This society [Jesuits] has been a greater calamity to mankind than the French Revolution, or Napoleon's despotism or ideology. It has obstructed the progress of reformation and the improvement of the human mind in society much longer and more fatally.

⁶⁰ From Wikipedia, **The French Revolution** began in May 1789 when the Ancient Régime was abolished in favor of a constitutional monarchy. Its replacement in September 1792 by the First French Republic led to the execution of Louis XVI in January 1793 and an extended period of political turmoil.... This sparked the **Reign of Terror**, an attempt to eradicate alleged "counter-revolutionaries"; by the time it ended in July 1794, over 16,600 had been executed in Paris and the provinces.

“...Or is it already bitten off” either figuratively, your head intact however the humiliation, or not... as with malice or as a *coup de grâce*? ⁶¹

It is unthinkable, or at least unreasonable, to believe that much malice might come our way, here, short of all things considered; that a revolution of some sort, coupled with a reign of terror, can happen. But as to cause, the rise of some despot or the like, this account from J. Christopher Herold, *The Age of Napoleon*. ⁶²

A collective insanity seemed to have seized the nation and turned them into something worse than beasts. The princess de Lamballe, Marie Antoinette's intimate friend, was literally torn to pieces; her head, breasts, and pudenda were paraded on pikes before the windows of the Temple, where the royal family was imprisoned, while a man boasted drunkenly at a cafe that he had eaten the princess' heart, which he probably had.

He adds, “There is, of course, nothing wrong in a program that aims to please everybody, except that as a rule it is a prelude to dictatorship.” That like the politician that claims to be all things to all people, they are finally nothing to anyone except themselves, their interest—not that of the those they claim to serve. And a “public servant” who only serves themselves is rife with malice.

⁶¹ From Wikipedia, a **coup de grâce** is a death blow to end the suffering of a severely wounded person or animal. It may be a mercy killing of mortally wounded civilians or soldiers, friends, or enemies, with or without the sufferer's consent.

⁶² *The Age of Napoleon* is the biography of an enigmatic and legendary personality as well as the portrait of an entire age. Napoleon's rise from common origins to enormous political and military power, as well as his ultimate defeat, influenced our modern age in thousands of ways, from the map of Europe to the metric system, from styles of dress and dictators to new conventions of personal behavior.

Pondering on points of POWER

"Is prevention better..." is a question stemming from the idiom, *prevention is worth a pound of cure* as another wise word from Benjamin Franklin. And from *Poor Richard's Almanack*, he comments as perhaps a cautionary tale, that "He that falls in love with himself will have no rivals." *It is healthy to love thyself*, I think, *but unhealthy to love only thyself*, leaving one stark blind to their faults, the foibles, and falsehoods. Yes, one who, reaching back to Greek mythology's Narcissus, figuratively actionably salivates as his own image—who does no wrong no matter how much wrong they do—and is thus unaccountable and apt to self-adulation along with certain, calloused condemnation of everyone else.

But more to the matter of *prevention*, versus some *cure*, is the human need for safety & security; and on this, Franklin warns, "Those who would give up essential liberty, to purchase a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety."

Sure, it is perhaps overused these days; Franklin's portending of liberty lost in exchange for supposed *safety & security*, but what is his point, his reasoning or rationale? Some suggest that this quote is misused, taken out of context, and misapplied to matters of personal liberty against statism. Others see it as finally the struggle for individual and relative local authorities against centralized powers whether in Washington DC or, at the time, England. But aside the range of interpretations or opinions remains the question of what kind and how much *safety & security*?

Many years later, Dwight D. Eisenhower said, "If you want total security, go to prison. There you're fed, clothed, given medical care and so on. The only thing lacking... is freedom." *But do prison or jails afford "total security?"* We could ask any that has *served time* but as to those *above the law*, free to break the law with impunity, I doubt that they have a clue or if they do..., would give it a care.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“...Or worse than the cure” is the back half of the previously presented idiom, *prevention is worth a pound of cure*. What is a cure, *the cure*, to this or that illness, a problem or even some “crisis”?

In the simplest of approaches toward *the* cure is first the nature of the problem, qualifying it and so forth, and then coming to (or arriving at) some solution if possible; something that works on some level, a one-time or evolving problem-solving exercise. But there are also one or more matters to consider in qualifying the problem(s)—not the least of which are the risks and issues, the latent or actual costs as effects or consequences. How much is known, understood during and after examination, analysis and so forth?

As with all such effort, there is (or can be) some *noise* or distortion, hype, exaggeration—lies—surrounding the presumed problem. In politics, *noise* is driven by/for power (of course), seizing a “crisis” as an opportunity, exploiting, and elevating the matter so as to render mass fear and thereby *gain an edge, work the system* for an advantage—and avenue to appear as “a savior” or hero, *to save the day* from some claimed-to-be culprit, a criminal element, evil, wicked, that hates goodness. And such political methods and means and methods are sometimes deemed “a false flag”,⁶³

Edward Bernays, the acclaimed “Father of Propaganda”, tells why such lies are believed in *Crystallizing Public Opinion*.

People accept the facts which come to them through existing channels...They have neither the time nor the inclination to search for facts that are not readily available to them.

⁶³ From Wikipedia, a **False Flag** is an act committed with the intent of disguising the actual source of responsibility and pinning blame on a second party. The term is popular amongst conspiracy theory promoters in referring to covert operations of various governments and cabals.

Pondering on points of POWER

“In the loop...” is the first half that is like *your either on the bus or not on the bus*, implies that one is *in the know*, aware, informed and otherwise *on board*.

Are you *in the loop* on the matters of power, force? Do you believe that *with absolute power there is absolute corruption*?⁶⁴ Do you believe that the mainstream media works on behalf of international power, “manufacturing” rather than reporting *the news* derived from independent, investigative journalism? Once again, Edward Bernays:

The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute *an invisible government* which is the true ruling power of our country.

To be *in the loop* is thus not the same as *following the crowd*, accepting the popular opinion, or casually assuming that the media and its ilk are in the business of ethical and earnest fact-finding, truth telling or anything of that sort. No, to be *in the loop* is to possibly be *far from the maddening crowd*, willing to venture or as said by Walt Whitman, “...sail thou forth to seek and find.”

Why bother to think? Because thinking, gaining understanding is power, as God’s truth is freedom. Still, *the crowd* or mass actively or passively accept, obey, often without thinking and sometimes because

It is difficult to get a man to understand something, when his salary depends on his not understanding it.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Lord Acton.

⁶⁵ Upton Sinclair, *I, Candidate for Governor: And How I Got Licked*

“...Or just looped” as another of the “in the loop” (from the previous page), but on this back half, a different meaning; “looped” as slang for: drunk/inebriate, or eccentric, enthusiastic. In this..., my purpose and point; “loop” and “looped” are not similar; the first as connected-informed, (as described in the previous page) and the second as either drunk-drugged and/or distracted, deceived.

“It is difficult...to understand something...,” when one’s interests are directed-driven—as by force—or one’s disposition is demurred, drunk or distracted, perhaps as *an escape* from something or someone. Consider for example one, among millions and more, is distracted and possibly deceived, their life entranced by, entrenched in sports, aptly described as a “sports-nut”.

In the last days of the Roman Empire, *the games* ⁶⁶ reached *fever pitch*, with many distracted and deceived, their appetite fed by/with *bread & circus*, ⁶⁷ sports, the coliseum, and *the games*

In an effort to keep the people of Rome happy, emperors were constantly looking for new ways of making the games more exciting. One of the most popular developments was the staging of famous battles from the past. ⁶⁸

More could or should have sought understanding, but many were drunk-drugged, distracted, deceived in *the bread and circus*.

⁶⁶ **Roman games:** ...Even after the Romans became converted to Christianity, they continued to hold the Roman Games, but it was not until the final stages of the Roman Empire that gladiatorial fights and the killing of wild animals for popular entertainment came to an end. <https://spartacus-educational.com/ROMgames.htm>.

⁶⁷ From Wikipedia, **bread & circus:** Roman politicians passed laws in 140 CE to keep the votes of poorer citizens, by introducing a grain dole: giving out cheap food and entertainment, “bread and circuses”, became the most effective way to rise to power.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Smoke the pipe” is more abstract, I believe. the meaning not clear or certain but for my purpose, pertains to the depicted American Indian practice of *passing the pipe*, a practice of resolve, peace, trust. Why smoke the *pipe* as the token of a bond, promise and all? Why settle for a settlement when it’s yours to win; “it” belongs to you because God manifested it, destined it as pleasing?

Our country is on the road of empire ⁶⁹ if not one, a long history of *meddling in foreign affairs*, alliances and then entanglements ⁷⁰, pulling it’s public *into the fray* given real or perceived evils, facing history’s cautionary tale of over-extension-expansion, continuous warring, and the consequential loss of liberty at home. Flash back to post-WWII, another Presidential farewell address:

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. ⁷¹

And yet here (or there) is where we are, *the pipe* snuffed out, and the warring and rumors of war as often and always.

⁶⁹ **American imperialism,**

https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/American_imperialism.

⁷⁰ “Meddling in foreign affairs...”, from U.S. President Washington’s farewell address, 1796: frustrated by French meddling in U.S. politics, Washington warned the nation to avoid permanent alliances with foreign nations and to rely instead on temporary alliances for emergencies...claiming that alliances are likely to draw the United States into wars that have no justification and no benefit to the country beyond simply defending the favored nation. Alliances, he warns, often lead to poor relations with nations.

⁷¹ Dwight D. Eisenhower.

"Pipe dream" is possibly a pipe of a different sort, an unattainable or fanciful hope or plan, expressed as, "You're dreaming," or "Dream on", as this response, however realistic or otherwise influenced in or through one's point of view, experience and other....

Have you ever known (of) a *pipe dream*, or ever had one? Someone hears you out, or even overhears you, and makes a remark as in the last paragraph, discounting or dismissing "it", however much your believed, hoped, and *dreamed* that it would or will happen, materialize, manifest and matter.

There is nothing wrong with dreams, dreaming, if just as an escape from reality, a momentary relief, a pleasant pastime; but as to a *pipe dream*, it does appear on some assessment(s) to *go too far*, as too much of a stretch, too high an expectation.

In 1938, the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain declared, "Peach for our time," concerning the Munich Agreement.⁷² Several decades later, John F. Kennedy referred to it, elaborating with the expression, "...not merely peace in our time, but peace in all time."⁷³ Yet the Cold War⁷⁴, as all wars, *gives no quarter* for peace.

⁷² The **Munich Agreement**: an agreement concluded at Munich on 30 September 1938, by Nazi Germany, the United Kingdom, France, and Italy. Most of Europe celebrated the agreement because it prevented the war threatened by Adolf Hitler....

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Munich_Agreement.

⁷³ American University commencement address, 1963.

⁷⁴ **Cold War**: a period of geopolitical tension between the Soviet Union and the United States and their respective allies, the Eastern Bloc and the Western Bloc, after World War II. Historians do not fully agree on the dates, but the period is generally considered to span the 1947 Truman Doctrine to the 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Pondering on points of POWER

“What’s fair & square...,” is one of those that goes *way back*, to mean simply: honest, straightforward as usually applied to competition; a game, sport or business dealing. If it’s not *fair & square*—or considered so by at least one—then it may not be fair, right, *on the up and up*.

But as long as humanity has existed or will exist, so too has corruption, a con or similar crime, that bends, twists or practically overlooks any given or set rules, laws, ethics, mores, promises, agreements, contracts and covenants, regardless of color or creed. Yes, *man is born into trouble as surely as the sparks fly upward* ⁷⁵ and in that, is subject to all kinds of mischief, malice and malpractice coming and going, up and down and all around.

It is bad that one cheats another or that some institution takes advantage of the apparent weaker, vulnerable, but is worse when such is done *under a cover* of secrecy or under the guise of good intentions or presupposition. And, possibly at the highest level of what is not *fair & square*, are the many crimes committed by government as described by John Maynard Keynes: ⁷⁶

By this means the government may secretly and unobserved, confiscate the wealth of the people, and not one man in a million will detect the theft.

Addressing or speaking on inflation or currency depreciation, the so-called “hidden tax”, Keynes’ point is that one’s savings and spending suffer in *buying power* because of the “secretly and unobserved...”, either kept secret or cleverly disguised as good and right for the public.

⁷⁵ Job 5:7.

⁷⁶ **John Maynard Keynes:** an English economist, whose ideas fundamentally changed the theory and practice of macroeconomics and the economic policies of governments.

“...**Versus down & dirty**,” is the back half of this two-part idiom, the antithesis of *fair & square* whether apparent, alleged...with all the pretensions, pronouncements, and poppycock.

The *down & dirty* is the worst because it is likely of liars, lies; those posing as well & good when in truth are wicked, evil—entirely driven by self-interest at the expense of even the ones they claim to care about as affections, loyalties. Deception is a *force-multiplier*, the so-called “half-truth”, withholding as their tools and techniques, stock & trade; such that,

In every age it has been the tyrant, the oppressor and the exploiter who has wrapped himself in the cloak of patriotism, or religion, or both to deceive and overawe the People.⁷⁷

And while they might not be historical, renown figures, yet they reflect the tyrant: covertly or overtly imposing power seized by sinister ways; desiring, demanding absolute control unrestrained by so-called law, and enabled therein as,

Men in general judge more by the sense of sight than by the sense of touch, because everyone can see but few can test by feeling. Everyone sees what you [or they] seem to be, [but] few know what you [or they] really are; and those few do not dare take a stand against the general opinion.⁷⁸

And

...he who seeks to deceive will always find someone who will allow himself to be deceived.

But living this lie, these lies, coincides with disrespect for all, including self, often with no realization of the facts, let alone truth.

⁷⁷ Eugene Victor Debs.

⁷⁸ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Ahead of the curve...,” is like *the leading (cutting) edge*, advanced, *state of the art*; something or somebody that excels, with “behind the curve” as then the opposite.

On the meaning of this idiom, *In Search of Excellence* ⁷⁹ was published in 1982; not the first of such books-programs aimed to educate and apply *best practices*, but a series that *went against the grain* at the time, focusing on America rather than Japan’s advances.

It goes without saying that *excellence* is a pursuit coupled with planning, performance, and progress; it is not a *pipe dream*, but is a vision, a mission, an operating plan of objectives underwritten by culture, commitment, and courage. That mistakes happen or failures are incurred is a given, accepted as part of the learning in the *leap forward* sometimes quipped as *no pain, no gain*. Without an *all-in* commitment, coupled with what coauthor Tom Peters calls “the basics”, such endeavors *die on the vine* or are greatly compromised. He opines,

Far too many managers have lost sight of the basics, in our opinion: quick action, service to customers, practical innovation, and the fact that you can’t get any of these without virtually everyone’s commitment.

How to achieve unanimous and universal commitment is crucial, but as to the pursuit going *ahead of the curve*, as one work associate told me time & again, “They must have a compelling reason to change.”

⁷⁹ *In Search of Excellence* is a book written by Tom Peters and Robert H. Waterman. First published in 1982, it sold 3 million copies in its first four years, While America was looking to Japan as the rising economic force. American businesses were studying Japanese management techniques and looking to learn from their successes; still, this book focused on successful American companies.

“...Or miles behind” is *behind the curve*, as *making-up* the margin or catching-up is daunting, practically impossible. In the realm of business or as *In Search of Excellence*, , *miles behind* is an organization frayed, on the fringes, on the brink of total failure.

Whether a person or persons, an organization or community, there are degrees, all kinds of folks with all kinds of experiences. What happens or how things happen is not always totally a personal decision, even for persons or a group. Yes, there are factors that can be considered or applied, as in the referenced book on business, but the reality is that sometimes *bad things happen to good people* and sometimes persons don't quit their job, surrender, or stubbornly stop, but rather their jobs quit them in downsizing, lay-offs, etc. ⁸⁰

In the episodes of life, the measures of “excellence” extends beyond *making money*—or the foremost measure of business—though few if any would argue that money essential and lots of money is lots of power of course.

When/as persons are *down & out* or have *hit rock bottom*, even that necessary is negligible or nonexistent; and *miles behind*, the view or perspective paints much impossibility of ever recovering, regaining even some measure of one's once property, possession,

Given *the times that we live in*, the persons in this *place in life* are on the increase. Desperate times are coming beyond Thoreau's expression of the “quiet”, ⁸¹ but more accurate is the disquieting for the masses, such times to test the meaning of excellence once again or perhaps as never before for this generation or another.

⁸⁰ The dilemma, the loss of jobs, was posed by Ross Perot during his run for President, referring in the combination of leveraged buyouts and general deindustrialization that occurred in much of the U.S. during the later half of 20th Century.

⁸¹ Henry David Thoreau: “The mass...lead lives of quiet desperation”.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Sticky fingers...**” is somewhat like the “sticky bandits” in the *Home Alone* film series,⁸² but is more broadly associated with those apt to thievery, stealing and such. Sometimes *sticky fingers* are owed to how someone is raised, the conditions and circumstances, that *push* them, forced in effect to rob, steal, and thief.

From the age of nine, I was on the streets. This came about because I was being rude with my parents and I was *moving things* without their permission, like money. So my stepfather didn’t like what I was doing and he didn’t like me, so he eventually put me out on the streets....⁸³

But other times *sticky fingers* are the practices, the processes, of powers who lie, cheat, rob and steal with impunity, *above the law*; those afforded privileges even to plunder by forces physical, financial, and psychological—not for simply survival or *to get by*, but to possess well beyond needs, certainly beyond *right*.

Like the robber, the State demands money at the equivalent of gunpoint; if the taxpayer refuses to pay, his assets are seized by force, and if he should resist such depredation, he will be arrested or shot if he should continue to resist.⁸⁴

And while *the State* plays the part of generosity, largesse, dolling out dollars for this or that, the reality is that it has no earnings via labor, but only by that which it forcibly obtains either directly or through public debt, borrowing at unprecedented levels. Extending its possession and power well beyond...is *sticky fingers* on a scale as no one can fully conceive let alone comprehend, past or present.

⁸² *Home Alone series*:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Home_Alone_\(franchise\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Home_Alone_(franchise)).

⁸³ Drexel Deal, *The Fight of My Life is Wrapped Up in My Father*.

⁸⁴ Murray Rothbard.

“...Or **fat fingers**,” is another of the “finger”; one usually applied to mistyping, hitting the wrong key(s) [a typo], or something of that sort given as probable cause for an error or mistake.

Can one have the combination, *fat, sticky fingers, missing the mark* now and then but still able to accomplish the deed, the “takeaway”, the *lift* or heist, the theft and even plunder?

Referring to the previous page, the “sticky bandits” might, in less than a stretch, show more than merely *fat fingers*, their tricks and schemes always *backfiring*, their capers blundered time and again, a throwback to Looney Tunes’ Wile E. Coyote or a host of slapstick-comedy productions.

The frustration and humiliation of *fat fingers* is ever growing given the smart phone and other relatively miniaturized devices; all this in combination with the two-handed texter, those young and young-alike armed with the wherewithal; blazing speed, full of sugar and caffeine, and the SMS language, ⁸⁵ never mind the grammar or spelling—it’s all about speed, the response time in 4G speed!

As to communications, *it is the best of times and the worst of times*; a time of many modes but less matter or meaning, much messaging no doubt but less social contact, community. And increasingly *atomized* as our lives and living are becoming, those with *fat fingers*, in frustration, refuse to text while the many go on texting to oblivion, believing all the time that closeness is just a click away, the convenience far outweighing contact or physical connections, any commitment left to the moment, any contract to monthly billing, fat fingers or otherwise.

⁸⁵ From Wikipedia, **SMS language**, textspeak, or texting language is the abbreviated language and slang commonly used with mobile phone text messaging, or other Internet-based communication such as email and instant messaging.

Pondering on points of POWER

“It might be a hit...,” as to *hit or miss*, the chance of some success (versus failure), or even the roll of dice, flip of the coin and “call it.” On the morbid side, the idiom might refer to *making a hit*, not a success but *taking someone out*, an execution, murder and more.

Persons of much POWER are prone to *making a hit* presuming that their position(s) alleviate them of allegations, without chance of accountability, prosecution, for/from their deeds. As to whether they are right, presuming..., is left to a record of grievances and even usurpations that generally follow Lord Acton’s famous dictum, *absolute power...corruption absolutely*. That when left unaccountable in/on criminal conduct—ostensibly aimed to possess more POWER—persons of this sort go beyond/beneath contempt, crushing anyone or anyone that *gets in the way*, *taking them out* absent contrition, conscience, or even consciousness.

What’s more is that the public, so called “citizens”, are conditioned for that described above; that those of POWER are exceptional, excused of any expectation of/for ethics, earnestness in/of their affairs—even as so called “public servants”. Indeed, politics and corruption go hand in hand.

One of the (many) problems with government is not that power corrupts or even that it is magnetic to corruptible people; rather, it is that we have been conditioned to tolerate corruption in power, and so we don’t even try to hold our politicians accountable.⁸⁶

As it were, and as it goes, this POWER ceded to endless corruption invariably turns on itself; the abusers abused, the deceivers deceived, the POWER brokers broken, an undoing of the unchecked as time has its way.

⁸⁶ Michel Templet.

“...**But then again, a miss,**” as POWER does not always win or even *win the day*. The problem with such POWER is that, to say it again, it turns on itself, the *Leviathan* annihilating it own in the wake of other’s demise, devastation on a legendary scale.

And while history may not repeat itself to the letter, what history offers is a rhyme, a rhythm, that interjects regulations above that which greed and graft omit, overlook, or obfuscate, so as to eventually *bring to light* that which was done or undone, the *dastardly deeds*—giving reason(s) to comprehend, confront and constrain *the nature of the beast*.

Still, it is a challenge even to understand ourselves, what we’re each capable of doing in/with our own individual corruption, let alone that of a collective or consortium, cabal and its cohorts. With , deception or disguise is at least *half the battle*, foremost are the intentions and interests, the desires and determination, even before the result or effect—while our doubts of *what happened* are treated with the pejorative, “conspiracy theory”.

What makes anyone think that government officials are even trying to protect us? A government is not analogous to a hired security guard. Governments do not come into existence as social service organizations or as private firms seeking to please consumers in a competitive market.

...

Government as we now know it in the USA and other economically advanced countries is so manifestly horrifying, so corrupt, counterproductive, and outright vicious, that one might well wonder how it continues to enjoy so much popular legitimacy and to be perceived so widely as not only tolerable but indispensable.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Robert Higgs.

Pondering on points of POWER

“The silver lining...,” the good news or *the bright spot*, is that drawn from darkness, the bad (news) or that looming *over our heads*.

In a favorite film, *The Silver Linings Playbook*⁸⁸, one of two main characters played by Bradley Cooper, remarks,

I don't want to stay in the bad place, where no one believes in silver linings or love or happy endings,” setting his hopes beyond the losses of his wife, house, job and possibly more.

To know of the book or film is to grasp or grapple with his challenge(s), the once POWER of owning or having things with the present, his problems, this psychosis that dwarfs his days. Once again, a page or line from the book/film.

She looks sad. She looks angry. She looks different from everyone else I know—she cannot put on that happy face others wear when they know they are being watched. She doesn't put on a face for me, which makes me trust her somehow.⁸⁹

And in his loss of these things, this POWER, comes his increased attention and appreciation for others of a similar situation; his self-absorption less so, his obsession of getting all *these things* back *behind him*.

In the climax, he chases after the one that “looks sad”, to explain how he feels about her and about them, about what (has) happened and how he “just needed some time to catch up.” Yes, he chases her just after his father pulls him aside and says,

Let me tell you. You got to pay attention to signs. When life reaches out with a moment like this it's a sin if you don't reach back....

And he does..., never mind POWER and all its else but trust.

⁸⁸ *The Silver Linings Playbook*, book (2008), film (2012).

⁸⁹ Matthew Quick, *The Silver Linings Playbook*.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“...**Amid the black clouds**,” for what would *the silver lining* be without the darkness about it; what would *The Silver Lining Playbook* story be without his losses...reduced to a psychiatric patient with a restraining order to boot?

For much of the film, one of two primary characters is *locked-into his head*, obsessed with restoring what was lost and implicitly living *happily ever after*. Time and again, he attempts to make contact with his estranged wife, violating the restraining order against the advice of his doctor, his brother (a lawyer), his probation officer and his parents—yet he goes on, looking for any possibility to woo her back while amending all else as possible. In short, his mission is to *make himself over*, better: the weight loss and physical conditioning; his attitude about life and his wife; and his contrition notwithstanding her part in the break-up, his arrest, and the attendant but averted requirements and regulations. He obsesses every detail,

And I squinted hard trying to see Nikki's face and even from a block away I could tell she was smiling the whole time and was so very happy, and somehow that was enough for me to officially end apart time and roll the credits of my movie without even confronting [her].

At some point of the book (but not the film), he apparently questions God as like the character of Job in the Bible.

Why did you give us so many stories about miracles? Why did you send Your Son down from Heaven? Why did you give us movies if life doesn't ever end well?

...as he realizes that his desires are idealistic, his efforts unrequited or unapproved. And *coming to grips* with the differences of what one wants and what life brings is not altogether bad or sad, *the darkness* that make *the silver lining* shine and that happiness is merely a moment, not *the end* of all things or *the be* of all things.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Don’t give up...**,” is the first part, followed by “The ship”; so jointly, *don’t give up the ship* as to mean simply expressed, “Keep trying,” or “Never say ‘Never’”, or something like that.

Another book and film, this time a true story, is *The Fugitive*⁹⁰; an accomplished surgeon is deceived by a large pharmaceutical that, using a colleague at this hospital, is falsifying test results. Murder occurs when a hired assailant inadvertently kills the surgeon’s wife rather than him, the intended *hit*, whom they believe has (or will) discover their conspiracy and *blow the whistle*. The rest of the story centers on his discovery..., the falsified testing and the related murder of his wife, as he relentlessly pursues.

Late in the film, *The Fugitive*, the colleague confronts the main character, a verbal and physical assault, with the colleague yelling, “You never give up, do you?” And how true it (or was), *his discovery* undaunted by the authorities, undoing a colleague, once presumed a friend, and a conspiracy hiding the drug as not only ineffective but dangerous, deadly.

To not *give up* is to go as far as you can—further than presumed, perhaps beyond belief. Do you know (of) such a person, persons? What *makes them tick* or what drives them toward such acts of survival, success however defined, determined, and deeded?

From the film, some closing words between Dr. Richard Kible (Harrison Ford) and Marshal Samuel Gerard (Tommy Lee Jones).

Dr. Richard Kimble: They killed my wife.

Deputy Marshal Samuel Gerard: I know it Richard. But it’s over.

[pauses and sighs]

Deputy Marshal Samuel Gerard: You know I’m glad. I need the rest.

⁹⁰ *The Fugitive*, film (1993).

“...**The Ship**,” is the closing end of the prior page title, “Don’t give up...,” *don’t give up the ship*.

In the previous one-pager was a brief of the film, *The Fugitive*; the true story of a surgeon wrongly accused of murdering his wife in conjunction with a conspiracy to cover-up the scandal of a drug (test), the latest product of a billion-dollar pharmaceutical company.

But back to the full or complete idiom, more a mantra, is the root of it deeply set in the U.S. military maritime beginning in the War of 1812, the last utterance of Captain James Lawrence.⁹¹ And since that magnanimous murmur are other application of the slogan: flags, t-shirts, stickers; all these uses to remind of us that some things are worth fighting for, whatever the odds, means and methods.

There is honor in the belief of a “noble cause” whether a new drug or other cause(s) that aims to protect, preserve, and defend.... But then the *belief* may be wrongly placed, the presumptions finally unfounded, undone, by or in the experience, unappreciated or valued.

One may believe a cause that at the core is a farce or ruse that lends, by design, to an ill-effect, outcome. One may embrace a group or collective, enticed as a part of something worthwhile or simply *fitting-in* yet unaware of the *true nature of the beast*, the reality.

And finally, *we are drawn to [such a] force....* They (groups) make us feel alive and vital. This may become an addiction—we feel compelled to expose ourselves to this energy again and again.⁹²

What kind of group(s) do you belong to, what kind of ship(s) do you board, and possibly steer, sail?

⁹¹ <https://www.navalhistory.org/2010/06/01/dont-give-up-the-ship>.

⁹² *The Laws of Human Nature*, Robert Green, p. 409.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Is it just in the air...,” or it could be something more, *in the water or in the ground* (too)?

No prior mention or matter addresses the *geoengineering* or “chemtrails” that crisscross our skies from week to week; nothing said of this system, the plan or purpose of gas(es) dispersed from high (-er) altitude aircraft, but certain that these emissions are not *just in the air* but more, in our water and soil.

I’m sorry but anybody who tells me that this is a natural phenomenon is either delusional or controlled opposition. I sat in the park a few weeks ago with my young son – it was a beautiful morning, a beautiful winter’s morning, clear blue sky, and I was enjoying the natural sunlight. And then the planes started to come across ... And within an hour a haze was just across the sky, and of course we didn’t see natural sunlight again for two days.⁹³

But then Wikipedia, under the topic: “chemtrail conspiracy theory”; is the explanation that debunks any claim; the *trails* are nothing but common condensation of contrails that are more discrete though diffusing quickly rather than chemtrails that languish for hours, slowly dissipating.⁹⁴ Purportedly the “scientific community” dismisses all claims of such systems as merely another fantasy or foolishness, the imagination of those fitting of a tinfoil hat. What then does one believe—or want to believe—if this be the only choice? Does one just forget or ignore the subject, the uncertainty, or does one consider that *the trails* exist as observed, and in the surrounding cloud of concern, deserves an actual, authorized answer for the sake of our air, water, and soil, our lives and living?

⁹³ Ian R Crane, *New World Order*, Liverpool 2008.

⁹⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chemtrail_conspiracy_theory.

“...**Or what**,” is the tail of the previous title, “Is it just in the air”; the uncertainty about contrails or chemtrails or just *trails*, this *tail* as open-ended or abstract in an attempt of the well-deserved but unreserved, authorized answer to the question: why aircraft are crisscrossing our sky *from sea to shining sea*, transforming the sky from clear blue to *pea-soup*, the sun diffused in the dissipated....

And from the previous, preceding title, there is the possibility that chemtrails or just contrails prolonged by the elevation, atmospheric conditions, or such—though the practice of weather modification, cloud seeding, or geoengineering exist, potentially prior to or applied in, the Johnson presidency, the Vietnam War.

It lays the predicate and foundation for the development of a weather satellite that will permit man to determine the world's cloud layer and ultimately to control the weather; and he who controls the weather will control the world.⁹⁵

Thus, such science and technology materialize, manifests (1962), the apparent motivation as finally military, such that chemtrails and contrails are possibly and potentially not the same (thing), the later as a band of momentary moisture or water, the former as much more perhaps to modify weather and/or for other reasons, causes, that infect our water and soil. And as to whether we, watching below, wonder of the worst of reasons, so goes the actual exercise(s) or mission, is of seemingly little point and given that whatever the emissions or ejections are, the details are purposely withheld, our minds left to believe what want to believe, the history and the distinct differences as a minor consideration—let alone the military's development and deployment of nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) weapons, warfare.

⁹⁵ Vice President Johnson at Southwest Texas State University (1962).

Pondering on points of POWER

"It could be thick..." is an idiom with applications that may apply to the air, such as with humidity, dense or low pressure, but also to the *present atmosphere* or setting; a tension or urge, a conversation lapsing into a confrontation, feelings as sullen, argumentative, belligerent. The comment, "The air is getting thick," is cautionary, to suggest the threat of someone or something *getting out of hand*, too serious or something like that.

In another favorite film, *Hunt for Red October*, Admiral Josh Painter (played by Fred Thompson), proclaims moments after an inbound crash, a failed carrier landing,

This business will get out of control. It will get out of control, and we'll be lucky to live through it.⁹⁶

As he pans the forward deck, hands in the air, the fire crews already on site though the pilot likely dead.

Hours earlier, before the air is apparently so *thick*, the admiral tells the main character, CIA Jack Ryan,

...Russians don't take a dump, son, without a plan. And senior captains don't start something this dangerous without having thought the matter through.

His intention, to outlay some guideline or rules on *how things work* in Naval operations, things of this sort, as it is; that when *the air gets thick*, someone or something made it so and, with some intentions and purpose, promoted if not produced the *present atmosphere* that invariably gives rise to fear, anxiety warranted or not, perceived or punctuated, but none the less and finally to test one's mettle, their strength and weakness. Is the air getting thicker, the *water warming*, or is it just my imagination?

⁹⁶ *Hunt for Red October* (1990).

“...Or it can be thin,” so, at opposite of *thick air*, is the “thin” air of say, high elevations, less oxygen—or nonexistent. How then do I apply the opposite to that prior, *thick air*?

There is the *thick*...and the *thin*, but I don’t think here that the two are opposite, but for this composition, *thin* is analogous to:

- *At a dead end*
- *The well has run dry*

Though it may **not** seem so, a *dead end* or a *dry well*, our national money tender or money cannot continue to distributed indefinitely or to be produced (or issued) without a sound basis, *out of thin air* or as fiat. ⁹⁷ Still, there is POWER in controlling the printing and control of money as the *command post* of the state, and

...The state always makes sure that it seizes and retains certain *command posts* of the economy and society. Among these *command posts* are a monopoly of violence...judicial power...channels of communication, transportation, irrigated water. [But] In the modern economy, money is the *command post*. ⁹⁸

And in all the seizure and retention of POWER is opportunity—perhaps privilege—in what seems to be endless but and colossal spend, despite the greater the circulation of fiat money, the lower its value or worth—with the POWER of such abuses and usurpations *thinning* over time, *the clock ticking to midnight, the well dry*. .

⁹⁷ **Fiat money** is backed by a country's government instead of a physical commodity or financial instrument and became the norm after U.S. President Richard Nixon decided to abandon the gold standard in 1971 and by doing so, it can no longer be converted into gold and is not directly tied to gold and is thus at risk from inflation. *Investopedia*.

⁹⁸ *Anatomy of the State*, Murray Rothbard, p. 54.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Time to throw down...” is another with possibilities, the meaning of “throw down” to fight, to literally throw someone, or going way back, *throwing down the gauntlet* as to duel, but then also *throwing in the towel*, as to concede, boxing.

As a question, when do you *throw down*, leading potentially to conflict, a fight? It’s one thing to watch a drama or some video, or even to sit ringside at a bout or event, but another to *throwdown*. And then, backing up, is the question, “Why?” Why fight, why go this far, the risk of losing, getting hurt or even dying?

There is one good reason for fighting, and that is if the other man starts it. You see, wars are a great wickedness, perhaps the greatest wickedness of a wicked species. They are so wicked that they must not be allowed. When you can be perfectly certain that the other man started them, then is the time when you might have a sort of duty to stop them. ⁹⁹

Aside the one-on-one kind of fight, is war as both a failure of policy but also the health of the state. ¹⁰⁰

Ideally, fighting on any scale is a last resort; still, it stands nonetheless as an enigma—the real cause(s) often hidden behind something noble or honorable. Yes, the *first casualty of war is always the truth*, and reality and reason incredulous to the many that suffer the most while understanding the least, no time but to *throw down* their lives at the alter of power’s abuses.

⁹⁹ T.H. White, *The Once and Future King*.

¹⁰⁰ **“War is the health of the state,”** the radical writer Randolph Bourne said, in the midst of the First World War. Indeed, as the nations of Europe went to war in 1914, the governments flourished, patriotism bloomed, class struggle was stilled, and young men died in frightful numbers on the battlefields—often for a hundred yards of land, a line of trenches, *A People’s History of the United States*, Howard Zinn.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“...**Gloves or the gauntlet**,” as a *throwback* to the days when duels were accepted methods for resolving disputes, the challenge from an insult, an attack of sort. From the History channel:

Today the phrase “throw down the gauntlet” means to challenge or confront someone, but in its earliest use it wasn’t meant as a metaphor, but was a physical action intended to issue a formal challenge to a duel.

But not be to be confused with *running the gauntlet* which means:

...a military punishment in which a prisoner was forced to run or walk between two columns of troops as they struck him with clubs, heavy ropes, whips or leather straps. The practice was common in the British navy in the 17th century but was also used by Native American tribes even earlier.¹⁰¹

And in either application, *gauntlet* is not good for at least one participant, punished or *cut down*. And indeed, the U.S. carried on such practices for a spell as the renown Alexander Hamilton endured such fate.

Vice President Burr ran for governor of New York State in 1804, and Hamilton campaigned against him as unworthy. Taking offense, Burr challenged him to a duel on July 11, 1804, in which Burr shot and mortally wounded Hamilton, who died the following day.¹⁰²

It might be considered in our *modern times* that duels and such are *byzantine*, brutal. But is more civil when arbitrary law takes all? Is less brutal when “domestic terrorism” holds sway over any who are decidedly criminals—not on principle but by corrupt panels?

¹⁰¹ <https://www.history.com/news/what-does-it-mean-to-throw-down-the-gauntlet>.

¹⁰² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Hamilton.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**On the edge...**” is more of the modern, the possibility that someone is *at the end of their rope* or toying with danger, fatal or not, *at the cliff* or *on the precipice* as almost *crossing the line* or *the point of no return*.

In the 1976 film, *Network* ¹⁰³, a series of disclosures or findings leads the anchor and central character to an outburst, first threatening to end his life, but then as the plot develops, to *blow the whistle*, his vacillating vitriol and vile message of “the news” as with the network’s ratings, first rising but then dropping precipitously, the audience apparently appalled by his rants and rile, the dehumanization of society. And what does management do but find a way to for him to *go quietly into the night*—not by his own will or way as first—but as with an assassination carried out *on the air*, ostensibly his martyrdom of madness in one way or another.

The film, the story, is a satire, of course, in that everything that happened there is now happening here, the actual programming living out perhaps its destiny, entertainment over the earnest effort to *tell the truth*. Yes, as it is, the story portended of not a possibility but the eventuality of *scratching one’s itching ears* (as market share) over investigative reporting, integrity, and the public’s interest, blurring the lines between *the real* and *the fake*, having an *ounce of objectivity* with a pound of “pundits” underwritten by elements aimed to undermine society and obfuscate reality.

Where is *network* now?

¹⁰³ From Wikipedia, ***Network*** is a 1976 American satirical black comedy-drama film perhaps best identified by the line, “We’re as mad as hell, and we’re not going to take this anymore,” in response to a *realization* of the networks actual purpose, practices, versus what the main character believes it was—or should be—as to broadcasting, the intent and content.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“**...Or over the mountain,**” is not necessarily the end result or outcome of *crossing over the line*, falling from *the edge* or *the precipice*, or plummeting to one’s peril; no, *over the mountain* may imply or insinuate something of clearing a constraint or clearing-up a confusion tantamount of deception, digression, danger and demise as the great John Newton ¹⁰⁴wrote and sang, “I was once blind but now I see!”

Have you ever crossed *over the mountain*, once blind but now able to see at least some of *the light* versus *the darkness*?

Either from the film, *Amazing Grace*, or in his history is a man that truly represents Christ’s power of mercy, grace, and love. That whether *a storm* or as any other encumbrance, a slave trader as admittedly enslaved to sin, he so humbly put it as:

I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I want to be, I am not what I hope to be in another world; but still I am not what I once used to be, and by the grace of God I am what I am.

Who better to express and expose reality than one as John, knowing *the life of a slave* deserving of death because of what he did to slaves underserving...? And again, more of his words, the script from the film, “God sometimes does His work with gentle drizzle, not storms,” but sometimes comes as *a storm*, as with John in that life changing moment, when the waters surge and swell, the wind whipping your life about your strength, power, dwarfed by all that happens until *dawn* when *the sun rises* and still you breathe, the wretch you are.

¹⁰⁴ From Wikipedia, **John Newton** was an English Anglican cleric, a captain of slave ships who later became an abolitionist, and an investor of trade. He served as a sailor in the Royal Navy for a period after forced recruitment. Converted to Christianity during a raging storm at sea, he later wrote the internally acclaimed hymn “Amazing Grace”.

Pondering on points of POWER

"A way forward..." implies progress, advancement ideally if not literally toward something better, best. Idleness, indecision is not enough—and *Heaven forbid* the opposite, retreating or regressing.

But as to *a way forward*, the question: for whom...what, notwithstanding whether "the way" is doable, feasible and all that? When authorities proclaim or pronounce a way forward, does this or that consider you, me, or us? And if we're included, or even considered, to what capacity and to what end?

Go back?" he thought. "No good at all! Go sideways? Impossible! Go forward? Only thing to do!"¹⁰⁵

And then, the possible of the unthinkable: what if the *way forward* is not a way at all, not really, but mere words aimed to mislead, misdirect, or muddle the matter. What if this *way forward* was or is ill-fated, designed to fail, doomed by design?

How do (or did) we know the truth, facts, intentions, and motivations) except to consider the source; who is behind it, ahead of it, against us, with us, or indifferent?

With access to power or force, those who outlay *a way forward* are prone to purposely withhold details or to politicize the whole ordeal with rhetoric, hyperbola, and hoopla on a scale equal to their notions of self-importance, pride, and pomp. And the real purpose may be hidden by profligate spending, pandering and propaganda (i.e., self-interest) that not only disses the interest of others but ultimately puts them in harms' way, a *culling of the herd*.

Where then lies *the way forward*? Is it material, physical, or spiritual? Is it a plan of men or is it something more, something true and of truth, that is there and here waiting to be embraced?

¹⁰⁵ R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit, or There and Back Again*.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“...Or stuck in the mud,” is the most troublesome of times for those who have *spun their wheels* only to *dig the hole(s) or ruts deeper*, forward, backward.

As a verb, “stuck” hardly seems positive though, as another meaning, “to stick” is possibly to *get it right* or to be on target (e.g., the gymnast *stuck* the landing).

Another film, *Stuck in Love* ¹⁰⁶, profiles a single-parent family (the other parent largely disparate though living locally), that shares the art of creative writing; the father, played by Greg Kinnear, as esteemed for one novel and the son and daughter, each pursuing this profession with mixed passions and progress. While the two, one in college and the other in high school, are in different *coming of ages*, both wonder why their dad is, well, “stuck in love”, with his former and only wife, their mother, who had an affair eventually marrying the man, seemingly giving-up the children in her decision.

But in fact, the dad too had cheated on her much earlier and as is later revealed as mercy-in-kind, remains resolute—even obsessed—with the prospect of *patching things up* and more, restoring what was lost, both the divorce and subsequent division between the daughter and mother.

Whereas he eventually tries to date, under the coaching of a mistress who is likewise married, he cannot convince himself of anything but his one and only wife, their reunification. Meanwhile both children are themselves dealing with life’s challenges intertwined with all the travails of *stuck in love*, their respect for both parents as a *mixed bag* of emotions and actions. Where does this go but finally for this family to *land on their feet*, forgive and find love, or at least some reason to reconcile and reunite.

¹⁰⁶ *Stuck in Love*, 2012.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Drain the swamp...**,” is probably the most memorable statement of our last president: one more promise made yet not kept; the Federal government as more than a behemoth of bureaucracy, billions of billions of misappropriated and even missing monies, giving a new measure to the term maleficence in the seemingly unlimited credit and unprecedented spending.¹⁰⁷

The appeal and attraction of the campaign slogan, “Drain the Swamp”, is perhaps as palatable as “Make American Great Again”, though given the recurring deficits and untenable debt, seems impossible, unthinkable, as time passes, and such practice persist.

The principle of spending money to be paid by posterity, under the name of funding, is but swindling futurity on a large scale.¹⁰⁸

...begging the question: Where is this...going?

Considering the basics of money management, the answer then is that authorities have *sold the sovereign out*, “swindling futurity” never mind posterity or the plain, common sense, of fiduciary, sound spending, public service, and any notions of nationalism.

¹⁰⁷ **Deficits** over the last 50 years have averaged just 3% of GDP. Even during the Great Recession, the largest deficit recorded (in Fiscal Year 2009) was just 9.8% of GDP. Even though the economy was reasonably strong before the pandemic hit, the deficit was already elevated by historical standards, largely because of the big 2017 tax cut. The COVID-19 recession and the congressional response to it have caused it to balloon.... **Debt** is the total the U.S. government owes—the sums it borrowed to cover last year’s deficit and all the deficits in years past. Each day that the government spends more than it takes in, it adds to the federal debt. Measured against the size of the economy, the debt was around 35% of GDP before the Great Recession of 2007–09 and had risen to nearly 80% of GDP right before the pandemic. Brookings, “How worried should you be about the federal deficit and debt?”, July 8, 2020.

¹⁰⁸ Thomas Jefferson.

“...Or turn back the sea,” is one to suggest an impossible feat against *the forces of nature*, the effects of the moon and all other factors that may often be assumed, daily, seasonably, and beyond.

Not until an “act of God” or nature is experienced with intensity, life-threatening, do we reconsider some semblance of the power in nature or God, to move mountains, with oceans and other water sources flooding the Earth at one time.¹⁰⁹

Still, the scales of science and the motivations of mankind seem a combination of not equal but certainly formidable power and force, from the nuclear reactions to genetic engineering, the prospect of *playing God*, the desire for deity that drives a few from the ancient to the modern world, to space and beyond, to be better than we are as created, formed from dust but possessing soul, spirit.

The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything except our thinking. Thus, we are drifting toward catastrophe beyond conception. We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if mankind is to survive.¹¹⁰

...while pondering the previous abstract question: Where is this...going?

The End Times describes the Earth as not only riddled by *wars and rumors of war*, but also a rising occurrence, frequency, and intensity, of events (seismic, seasonal, sickness) perhaps on scale as never experienced and, if not halted, will (would) even end *the elect*. This is where “this is...going”, never mind our thinking or anything that might hold back the judgment of God, the reign of Christ, and the end to all evil.

¹⁰⁹ From Wikipedia: **The Flood** is part of what scholars call the primeval history, the first 11 chapters of Genesis.

¹¹⁰ Albert Einstein.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Ride high...**,” means to be successful, to accomplish much on scale of perhaps *the high life*.

In 1986, Steve Winwood wrote and produced his song, “Back in the High Life,”¹¹¹ and here is the refrain, some of the words:

I'll be back in the high life again,
All the doors I closed one time will open up again
I'll be back in the high life again
All the eyes that watched me once will smile and take me in
And I'll drink and dance with one hand free
Let the world back into me and on I'll be a sight to see
Back in the high life again.

A story of *taking back* what was lost, the story or theme is about *what use to be* and, as the words follow, will return, to *ride high* again, as a somewhat revelation of recovery, restoration, renewal.

As any story or theme of this kind goes, the idea is appealing, the attitude to *get beyond* or *put behind* the past, whatever or however it happened, and to find *surface from the somber seas* to breathe again, to *bask in the sun* and feel the warmth of all that recovery means, maybe more.

Referring again to John Newton (from several pages back), so too did he *come out of the storm*—though not the man of *yesterday* or times past, but much more as a new being, born again, redeemed, and purposed to please God against all that had happened, the life of a slave trader. To *ride high* (again) is not nearly as profound...nor as promising as wretch that is saved, the mercy of God miraculous, mad manifest by and through the coming of the Messiah.

¹¹¹ From Wikipedia: “Back in the High Life” is the fourth solo album by English singer, songwriter, and multi-instrumentalist Steve Winwood, released on 30 June 1986, the album proved to be his biggest success to that date.

“...Or lay low,” as to either be *brought low*, figuratively, or to willfully remove oneself from some potentially dangerous or risky situation or circumstance, intending to avoid such, steering clear of otherwise trouble or worse.

Again, from the film, *Luther*,¹¹² some exchange between Luther and a character named Spalatin¹¹³, a counselor for Frederick of Saxony who advises Luther to “lay low, until I can sort this out,” regarding the reaction of the papacy to Luther’s criticisms. ¹¹⁴ And as the conflict and contention unfold, much loss of human life ensues, a civil war in effect, with reforms of the faith to follow.

As the film portrays, Luther is himself under much stress and strain, perhaps with some regret on his part, reformation at cost he did not or could foresee—even as he could not or would not recant under threat of his own life as much less than the many..., but still, he says:

Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would *go to pieces*, I would still plant my apple tree. ¹¹⁵

What kind of man (or person) was Luther but one convinced that his conscience with right and true and thus something of significance—which he could not go against, the alternative as not right or safe.

¹¹² From Wikipedia: **Luther** is a 2003 American-German epic historical drama film loosely based on the life of Martin Luther.

¹¹³ From Britannica: **Georg Spalatin** was a humanist friend of Martin Luther and prolific writer whose capacity for diplomacy helped advance and secure the Protestant Reformation in its early stages.

¹¹⁴ From Wikipedia: Luther taught that salvation and, consequently, eternal life are not earned by good deeds but are received only as the free gift of God's grace through the believer's faith in Jesus Christ as redeemer from sin. His theology challenged the authority and office of the pope....

¹¹⁵ Martin Luther,

Pondering on points of POWER

“**A siege...**” is a slow assault, surrounding the enemy and effectively staving them out (e.g., Vicksburg, MS ¹¹⁶). As a risk of war, the losses of an outright assault are estimated higher than a slow one, the *endgame* to eliminate strongholds, fortresses, fortifications.

By siege or by any other way, the fall of Vicksburg was strategic to the division of the South, “the nail-head that held the South’s two halves together”. ¹¹⁷ Once taken down, this fair city would not celebrate the 4th of July for many decades to come, folks embittered by the deprivation and destruction that hangs over defeat much longer than the sights and smells of slow death.

Vicksburg was not the only such siege of that day and certainly not through time and memorial in the *Art of War*:

Those who win every battle are not skillful -- those who render others' armies helpless without fighting are the best of all.

But then, and for those lay sieged, the experience is extreme, the suffering and sacrifice, the struggle to survive, “a deadly dull”. ¹¹⁸

What remains for those that do (or did) survive, suffering more in memorial, is the *soft force* of power in perpetuity; where or when

One likes people much better when they’re battered down by a prodigious siege of misfortune than when they triumph. ¹¹⁹

...when they endure under such hardship, beaten and broken beyond any chance of recovery, restoration, and respect.

¹¹⁶ From history.com; the **Siege of Vicksburg** (May 18, 1863-July 4, 1863) was a decisive Union victory during the American Civil War (1861-65) that divided the confederacy and cemented the reputation of Union General Ulysses S. Grant (1822-85).

¹¹⁷ Jefferson Davis.

¹¹⁸ George R.R. Martin, *A Feast for Crows*.

¹¹⁹ Virginia Woolf.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“...Or an assault,” is not “dull” but *down & dirty* just the same; and it happens for a variety of reasons, threatening *life & limb*, an overt offense whatever or wherever the event or experience. As an example, *Empire of Illusions*, author Chris Hedges writes:

The assault on education began more than a century ago by industrialists and capitalists such as Andrew Carnegie....

Citing the cause as largely the influence and oversight of capitalist, their aims to change colleges from environments for “intellectual inquiry” to institutions of “interest in the financial bottom line.” And it is in this/these changes that he believes much was/is lost, the education system eviscerated of the humanities and its purpose(s).

We’ve bought into the idea that education is about training and “success”, defined monetarily, rather than learning to think critically and to challenge. We should not forget that the true purpose of education is to make minds, not careers. A culture that does not grasp the vital interplay between morality and power, which mistakes management techniques for wisdom, which fails to understand that the measure of a civilization is its compassion, not its speed or ability to consume, condemns itself to death.

And still more,

Ironically, the universities have trained hundreds of thousands of graduates for jobs that soon will not exist. They have trained people to maintain a structure that cannot be maintained. The elite as well as those equipped with narrow, specialized vocational skills, know only how to feed the beast until it dies. Once it is dead, they will be helpless.

How soon will *the beast* see its end by siege, assault, or self-annihilation, in this post-industrial age, the financial and commercial markets supported largely by incessant government spending, speculation, and the apparent absence of sound financial management as *an assault* on the solvency of society.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**At odds...**” means to be opposed to, or with, something or someone; in conflict over/with...or in variance about.... When/as persons are *at odds*, they are divided internally, perhaps irreparably, and thus are weakened, possibly ruined, as to vitality, vigor and even vision, as *a house divided cannot stand*.¹²⁰

In the last phrase, *the divided house*, is much to consider in the days to come, our future as a country, culture, and community. Whereas cooperation and communication are key to any meaningful relationship, anything/anyone *at odds*—to mean decidedly opposed to community or otherwise divisive, deceptively-driven to undermine goodwill and fellowship—poses a clear and present danger. Indeed, as Christ explains,

Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation,
and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.

...the result is ruin, the breakdown of societal strength whether from the bottom-up, marriage and family, or top down, is the age-old strategy to *divide and conquer*.

... A divide and conquer game is now underway inside the United States which is calculated to produce instability. It naturally comes on the heels of a societal demoralization (decades in the making). [] The final stage (normalization) signifies the acceptance by the United States of Russian and Chinese military dominance (formalized by a treaty). This, of course, is only one dimension of the crisis/normalization process. Yet, if things go according to plan, it will be the decisive dimension.¹²¹

And where this will go is, well, *waiting in the wings*.

¹²⁰ *A house divided cannot stand* is sourced from the Book of Matthew 12:22-28 but is often associated with or attributed to Abraham Lincoln.

¹²¹ J.R. Nyquist, *The New Tactics of Global War*, 2015.

“...**Or even-steven**, is not the opposite or *at odds* to the later idiom; no, it means to be evenly matched, seemingly fair.

If one says, “We didn’t stand a chance,” then they obviously would not say it was *even-steven*, but that *it was over before it began*. Again, J.R. Nyquist,

Today, as never before, *the pariah* is the only man with the chance to think for himself. Everyone else is relentlessly compelled by peer pressures. Everyone constantly blackmails everyone. The threat of ostracism easily molds the soft democratic soul into fashionable shapes. The out-of-fashion individual, the outcast (perhaps the only real human being remaining) eats out of some dumpster on the edge of town.

Leaving the country, culture and community unfairly influenced, *the deck stacked against them* by the pressures of conformity and compliance, obedience with or without odds, and unity at any cost, individualism “out-of-fashion”.

He continues, this course of individualism versus *the collective*, citing “the best society” as,

[one] in which evils are limited by devices of Machiavellian construction (as opposed to devices of utopian or ideological construction). And in order to make such devices, you have to understand how things work. This is very different from how they “ought” to work.

In contrast to that which taps into the nature of man, his (her) desire and determination to “solve great problems” though in contrast with the *days of yore*: “The brutality of our daily thought, our disconnection from spirit, [would be] readily apparent to a medieval or ancient person,” implying that they, much more than us, were connected to the spiritual life, that prevailing power that some call conscience, creed, or constitution of one’s *better angels*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Take heart...,” as in to *give a care*, show compassion, support a good cause and such expressions of humanity, the *better angels*. And taking all these expressions into consideration, what then can, or should we each do to *take heart*, to love one another?

One must have it, *heart to take heart*. If/as one is heartless or cold-hearted, the chance of *taking heart* is much as depicted in The Grinch.¹²² To recall, this antagonistic character hates Christmas because of an underdeveloped heart, a heartless soul whether created in the imagination of one man or manufactured by ill influences of power, past and present, notwithstanding the psychologic and spiritual effects of/for evil, self-directed, or inflicted but possessed by something or someone.

Once again looking at The Gospel, Jesus is met by one (possibly two) who are in such a way; self-mutilating, convulsing and confrontational, this *something or someone* (and then more), addressed Christ, acknowledging who he is as well who they are and then more, his power over them.¹²³ And from this encounter, the experience witnessed by more than the possessed man and evil spirits, Jesus frees or heals, taking *heart* on the tormented and terror-stricken soul(s).

...and the impure spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

And in taking *heart* as it was, pigs do or did fly on that day, while the troubled and tormented, were restored in peace.

¹²² From Wikipedia: **The Grinch** is a fictional character created by the currently condemned Dr. Seuss.[1] He is best known as the main character of the 1957 children's book *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*.

¹²³ Taken from the Gospel of Mark but also Luke and Matthew.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“...Or don’t give a rat’s ass,” as to mean, “I don’t care,” whatever one it applies to, assigns it, accentuating their indifference.

Call it apathy or deference, but not *giving a rat’s ass* is a serious problem for society.

It’s a disease. Nobody thinks or feels or cares anymore; nobody gets excited or believes in anything except their own comfortable little God damn mediocrity. ¹²⁴

And it’s not as though it is an isolated or limited problem; for as any disease, the possibility is that if left unattended it can spawn into something much larger, a contagion, epidemic. Once settled in apathy, a society is soon to *go quietly into the night*.

The subtle and deadly change of heart that might occur in you would be involved with the realization that a civilization is not destroyed by wicked people; it is not necessary that people be wicked but only that they be spineless. ¹²⁵

And to be *spinless* is to *have no backbone*, no determination, drive, or duty to *take heart*; it is not just to give-up or give-in but to give-away the very thing that makes us individually human—as a *spinless* soul drops neath the earth, *head buried in the sand*. And

Many have given up...[and] anyone who has traveled so far will not easily be dragged again into the world.

And it not only silence but more, inaction or idleness—or even words without commensurate action, as

I can’t believe what you say, because I see what you do.

...or what you don’t do.

¹²⁴ Richard Yates, *Revolutionary Road*.

¹²⁵ James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Burned-out...**,” is one that we generally encounter in life, the loss of desire, drive, or determination, exhausted in the effort, nothing left to offer, occupy. This idiom is contemporary, the convention as *fatigued* or simply *tired-out*.

Burnout is nature's way of telling you, you've been going through the motions your soul has departed; you're a zombie, a member of the walking dead, a sleepwalker. False optimism is like administering stimulants to an exhausted nervous system.¹²⁶

In the course leading up to or before it, *burned-out*, is the sense that something is not right, some of which may be evident, identifiable, while other..., unknown or uncertain—and it is the latter that leaves one unsure; that perhaps, they're just *not in it*; lackluster or lazy or have a poor attitude, malcontent, *not a team player*.

Is apathy the same as *burned-out*, or something different? One can *lose heart* possibly to incur apathy, indifference, the previously presented, “I don't give a rat's ass”?

I'm tired, inevitably. But it's more than that. I'm hollowed out. I'm tetchy and irritable, constantly feeling like prey, believing that everything is urgent and that I can never do enough.¹²⁷

To consider the excerpt above as a description of *burned-out* is to zoom in on the word “feeling” or anything synonymous; that when someone is *burned-out*, they still feel...have feelings, and sense that something is amiss. Whereas in apathy, there are/is less feeling(s) if not an absolute indifference, deference, *devil-may-care* attitude. To be *burned-out* is not equal to apathy, the first as *giving it all*—or at least much—and apathy as giving nothing, nothing at all.

¹²⁶ Sam Keen, *Fire in the Belly: On Being a Man*.

¹²⁷ Katherine May, *Wintering: How I learned to flourish when Life became frozen*.

“...**Raked over the coals**,” seems related to the phrase, “I got *burned*,” deceived and/or betrayed, and in/from this incident or encounter past or present is not hurt, hindered and even hopeless.

When one endures a test or trial that really challenges their mettle, they may end-up possibly bitter or better depending on the timing, their understanding or acceptance and other factors within or about it, them. One person may view the ordeal in retrospect and say and believe, “I am better for it,” while another the opposite, angry over the injustice or, as they see it, undue pain, unjust punishment. If the test or trial involves a personal relationship (as in family and friends) what’s to say that this dilemma is degrees more, the realization that someone who seemingly cared or cares is cruel beyond measure, one’s feelings crushed by fallaciousness, ferocity.

Yet each man kills the thing he loves
By each let this be heard
Some do it with a bitter look
Some with a flattering word
The coward does it with a kiss
The brave man with a sword ¹²⁸

And in such..., to wonder why and for what purpose someone would do such a thing; why they *kill the thing(s)* they love? Is/was it envy, jealousy, or just plain cruelty? Did they merely *rake another over the coals*, or did they altogether *burn them at the stake* or *hang them high*? Did they commit such on impulse or methodically? Are/were they *sound of mind* or overtaken by emotional problems, mental illness, or spiritual forces of wickedness or evil? Do/did they admit to wrong, or do/did they *hide it under the rug*, denying any culpability, refusing to confront the matter, admit their act(s) or take responsibility, accountability?

¹²⁸ Oscar Wilde.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Smack dab...**,” means simply to be precise, *dead on*, having *hit the mark* so it seems.

One can be *smack dab*, as they believe or conceive it, and then not; somehow shifted, maybe asunder, tumbling out of control or finally rested in some remoteness, their surety and security *blown away* by the *whirlwind*, the flurry, fury, or storm that pushes them beyond, potentially out of nowhere, lost in space and time.

In another favorite film, *Goodwill Hunting* ¹²⁹, in an intense moment between the main character, Will Hunting and the psychologist played by Robin Williams, passions are stirred as Will lands smack dab in the deep and disturbed life of the doctor, the debilitating death of his wife and his depression thereafter. Looking at a painting on the wall of the office, Will says,

...that's not what concerns me...the colors are fascinating...I think you're about one step away from cutting your ear off.... Maybe you're in the middle of a storm.... Maybe you married the wrong woman.... That's it, isn't it? You married the wrong woman.

And what follows is the fury, a deep and disturbed place in the doctor, the remaining grief of his now gone wife, *gone ballistic*.

Later in the story, the doctor describes meeting his wife, their beautiful relationship, the tenderness between person's that really care about one another. The doctor was and is *smack dab* in love, though in degrees that come to those that *lose a loved one*, the longing and lasting memories, perhaps for the last time. It is having a precious thing and losing it that makes for both the better and the bitter, the love that was and still is more to come, preferably unceasing or undaunted by the storms, land or sea, keeping one *smack dab* in love.

¹²⁹ *Goodwill Hunting*, 1997

“...**Or out-in-la-la-land**,” is not perfectly opposite the previous *smack dab*; to be *in la-la-land* can mean *spacey*, *way out there* or as Will hunting out it, “one step from cutting off your ear.”

In 2016, a film by the same name ¹³⁰, two aspiring young artists come together to *make music* in more ways than one; and as divine as romance can be, their passion is pushed to the stars in the twists and turns from the real to the surreal, from discord to harmony.

There is sometimes a deep and sometimes deadly dread that follows a breakup by one if not more, reminiscing of what was and imagining what could have been—or should be.

La-la-land is not that far away in the figurative state of a fallen world full of much to *bring you down* and leave you destitute, for dead, if not physically than emotionally, spiritually. For as much as one is drawn into or deepened by relationships, romantic or not, they are changed in the depths of their heart, their soul. To extend their care to another is to their credit as the risk if not reality is that that it may not last or worse, may be exploited, the abuses not necessarily physical but abuse just the same. Still, and true to the power of love, is the possibility of forgiveness, preferably not forgetting some favorite times.

You can love someone so much...But you can never love people as much as you can miss them. ¹³¹

But “not forgetting” takes power, to live love and to keep it, no matter what was done, who did it, or if they care at all.

¹³⁰ From Wikipedia: ***La La Land*** is a 2016 American musical romantic comedy-drama in which two somewhat down & out, performing artists find each other in the momentary failures and while eventually parting ways, once again are found together imagining of might have happened had their futures developed together.

¹³¹ John Green.

Pondering on points of POWER

"Get back your life....," or *get on with your life*, is one that seems to suggest forgetting—*leaving it all behind* and starting anew, now and.... But can it be done; simply to *walk away* and forget what happened, the where and how, let alone the why? Is it a matter of will or is more finding the right way—presuming there is a way—to recreate yourself in somewhat a *la-la-land*, separating love from its later days and foraging ahead without....

Though lovers be lost, love shall not; And death shall have no dominion.¹³²

Is it necessary to kill love to *get on* or to *get back* or, as another dread, maybe it was not love but only your imagination, to want it to be even if it was not there or even possible?

When you loved someone and had to let them go, there will always be that small part of yourself that whispers, "What was it that you wanted and why didn't you fight for it?"¹³³

Or maybe you did "fight for it"; maybe you really tried and *gave it your all*, making sacrifices with suffering along that way; and in other words, you really cared about them, her, him, one or more.

Sadly enough, the most painful goodbyes are the ones that are left unsaid and never explained.¹³⁴

And maybe you didn't understand, and still don't...., the cause(s) or reasons for it, of it and because of it. And maybe just maybe, one should never forget what seemed love if not love, what was if not anymore and what has changed the one for the better, the power to forgive but not forget, to keep love that love may keep.

¹³² Dylan Thomas.

¹³³ Shannon L. Alder

¹³⁴ Jonathan Harnisch, *Freak*.

“...Or are you DOA,” as again a figurative possibility, your sensitivity of/for your senses, deadened in the drudge, dread, and despair. And though not a complete opposite of *getting your life back*, it is reasonable to think that if love cannot restore your life in some measure, then you are practically dead or deadened.

In still another film of mind is that of *Restoration*¹³⁵, the setting is England at or around the period of The Black Plague.¹³⁶ Notable and noble characters include both the Royal court and two budding physicians or interns, both pursuing alchemy in their own way, one serious and astute while the other, played by Robert Downey Jr. as more a libertine, squandering his talents and monies on a sorted and surreptitious lifestyle of debauchery and dissipation, gifted indeed but rapacious and reckless beyond restoration so it seems.

Yet, as the plague takes its hold, the second is shaken to sobriety, literally and morally, following a series of tragedies: the death of his colleague and counselor, the death of the mother of his child during childbirth and the death and destruction of the Pestilence—during which he is separated from the one remaining affection, his baby daughter of which he cannot spare to lose. Miraculously, the man commences to carry on with his profession while searching frantically for his daughter amid the carnage of a city in in chaos. Alas, he is brought to her, his daughter, through the intervention of a grateful and graceful king—convinced that the wayward and whimsical doctor is now true to himself, others too.

¹³⁵ *Restoration*, 1995.

¹³⁶ From Wikipedia: **The Black Plague**. (also known as the Pestilence, the Great Mortality, or the Plague)[a] was a bubonic plague pandemic occurring in Afro-Eurasia from 1346 to 1353. It is the most fatal pandemic recorded in human history, resulting in the deaths of 75–200 million.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**On the bus...**,” reminds me of Ken Kesey’s famous psychedelic bus, “FURTHER” ¹³⁷, wherein the statement was made famous, “You’re either on the bus or off the bus.” And so thought that his “merry pranksters” launched a movement; that what began a transnational road trip to appear at the opening of the Broadway play, “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest” ¹³⁸ based on Ken’s novel, would become an iconic symbol for the younger, up and coming counterculture, the start of an anti-establishment counterculture.

A road trip was augmented with a video-taped, LSD-induced fantasy, as perhaps introduced by the CIA who conducted tests at Stanford University where Ken did his graduate work and evidently volunteered for such experiments for money. Taking a line from his novel, “But it’s the truth even if it didn’t happen,” the CIA conducted such experiments at the interest of the state for interrogation or otherwise, a “truth serum”, sedating the patient in conjunction with other methods to extract information. And *on the bus*, they went, *the merry pranksters* from the West to eventually New York, all the while experiencing something....

¹³⁷ From Wikipedia: **FURTHUR** is a 1939 International Harvester school bus purchased by author Ken Kesey in 1964 to carry his "Merry Band of Pranksters" cross-country, filming their counterculture adventures as they went. Due to the chaos of the trip and editing difficulties, the footage of their journey was not released as a movie until the 2011 documentary film *Magic Trip*—although the bus featured prominently in Tom Wolfe's 1968 book *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*.

¹³⁸ From Wikipedia: ***One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*** (1962) is a novel written by Ken Kesey. Set in an Oregon psychiatric hospital, the narrative serves as a study of institutional processes and the human mind as well as a critique of psychiatry and a tribute to individualistic principles. It was adapted into the Broadway (and later off-Broadway) play *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* by Dale Wasserman in 1963.

“...Or thrown under...,” is the understood finish of *thrown under the bus*, a common idiom for the day that implies that someone or somebody did you wrong, and on this possibility if not certainty of life, consider that

People will often give you a detailed tour of the underside of the bus that they will throw you under later.¹³⁹

To say that there are signals and signs foretelling of *thrown under the bus*.

What is more is the sense of betrayal; that what or who was/is believed to be trusting and trustworthy is apparently not, the conditions or their character unbecoming of what was thought...in their words, actions, and general behavior, whatever the intentions, whoever the intended.

The evil that is in the world comes out of ignorance, and good intentions may do as much harm as malevolence, if they lack understanding. On the whole, men are [better] than bad.... But they are more or less ignorant, and it is this that we call vice or virtue; the most incorrigible vice being that of an ignorance that fancies it knows everything and therefore claims for itself the right to [destroy].¹⁴⁰

And beyond/aside intentions are stupidly, selfishly and shortsightedness ahead of costs and consequences that, as a moral to a story, invariably has lasting effects—not the least of which is that *time has a way of revealing the truth*, exposing the wrong and exculpating the underserving or innocent, yet *thrown under*....

Do you know what the underside of *the bus* looks like, the figurative tread marks and other marking of one betrayed?

¹³⁹ Steffan Piper.

¹⁴⁰ Albert Camus.

Pondering on points of POWER

“On the horizon, the...,” means that it is soon, about to happen and still, “I can see it coming.”

As I write this composition, things are happening that some claim as “unprecedented” to mean that in their mind, it (or that) has never happened before. And as to whether it is unprecedented, it is striking, spell-bounding and perhaps shocking too.

It may be shocking when it appears as though one is *thrown under the bus*, but then realize that they are *on the bus* or more, driving it. It may seem shocking that the state shuts down schools, churches, and businesses—as never done in the history of our country—and yet society does not seem shocked at all, dulled. Indifferent or deadened. It may be shocking as to what lies *on the horizon*, the continued loss of liberties and rising forms of force in conjunction with international rule—aimed to consolidate and concentrate the politic, economic, and other centers of power.

Unlike other times in history, the thousands of *horizons* that have happened under the watchful world of Earth, is that, as it seems, technology enables this shocking, this *brave new world*.¹⁴¹ But then,

A real efficient totalitarian state would be one in which the all-powerful executive of political bosses and their army of managers control a population of slaves who do not have to be coerced, because they love their servitude.

And *shocking* or *future shock*¹⁴² is not *over* or *on the horizon*, but is here, about us and potentially within us, changes that dangerous to no humans but the species and all creation.

¹⁴¹ In reference to Aldous Huxley’s dystopian by the same name.

¹⁴² **Future Shock:** a certain psychological state of individuals and entire societies., a personal perception of “too much change in too short a period of time.

“Sun is about to set,” is certainly related to the last title, “on the horizon”, though it implies a dying or death, a foreboding or portending of something soon gone, the loss of hope or the end of something possibly good. Consider again Alvin Toffler, author of *Future Shock*,

The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.

Suggesting that if the case, then at least part of the loss of *good* is opportunity to learning. And if we stop learning, regarding history in the making, what is left but stupidity, selfishness, and shortsightedness—the combination of which is a world largely devoid of critical thinking, care, and incredulity—leaving many to simply submit to whatever *comes down*—whatever it really is!

You’ve got to think about big things while you’re doing small things, so that all the small things go in the right direction.

As another part of the Toffler’s prescience, suggesting that the “small things” matter much to the “big things”; the things that are here and, on the horizon, planned or in plan—not for your interest or even that of most—but spelling a *Dark Winter* ¹⁴³ and still more, seasons of increased and intensified pain, punishment, and pleasure on a scale unprecedented.

¹⁴³ **Dark Winter:** On June 22-23, 2001, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Johns Hopkins Center for Civilian Biodefense Studies, the ANSER Institute for Homeland Security, and the Oklahoma City National Memorial Institute for the Prevention Terrorism, hosted a senior-level war game examining the national security, intergovernmental, and information challenges of a biological attack on the American homeland. As perhaps an manifestation of this..., and while in the last presidential debate, then Vice President Joe Biden used to term as a warning to the public.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Wild goose chase...,” as in a foolish and hopeless pursuit of something assessed as unattainable, which is something most of us have probably participated in at one time or another.

From a book by the same title, Mark Batterson writes, “We need to quit living as if the purpose of life is to arrive safely at death,” or in other words, we need to live more courageously and less cowardly against the fomented fears of those who create or exploit crisis. In and through this approach to life is the practice of prayer, so says Mark, to grow faith—rather than our fears—and set one on a path of courage, a calling that is beyond this world both in place and in power.

Each prayer is like a seed that gets planted in the ground. It disappears for a season, but it eventually bears fruit that blesses future generations. In fact, our prayers bear fruit forever.

Prayer is for each and all, those who believe in God, past and present, and the plan of man’s salvation, the transforming power of God’s Spirit and saving grace of Christ Messiah.

Besides courage is a call by/for wisdom; one that is likewise not of this world—contrary and contentious though it be—as a gift of discernment not of the world—but beyond it.

As I look back on my own life, I recognize this simple truth: the greatest opportunities were the scariest lions. Part of me has wanted to play it safe, but I’ve learned that taking no risks is the greatest risk of all.¹⁴⁴

And though some ventures may be (or have been) a *wild goose chase*, there is courage and wisdom for those who pray, trust, and wait. Yes, it is the way that Christ made for those that choose and are chosen.

¹⁴⁴ Mark Batterson, *In a Pit with a Lion on a Snowy Day: How to Survive and Thrive When Opportunity Roars*

problems, pains, and pleasures

"...Or **cooked goose**," to say, "You're in big trouble," but also, to make it worse, you're considered the cause. And as with the common human condition of a *wild goose chase* is the less common, *your goose is cooked* or more so, *you're a dead duck*.

Frustrating and humiliating, a *wild goose chase* seems of lesser concern than *cooked goose* considering the risks or the more likely the outcome; and in this comparison, the *cooked* is lacking *another horizon* in this world, *the final getting-up morning*, boiled, fried, or roasted when/where one *leaves the world* at least in body.

As to *goose* or *duck*, the memory of Daffy Duck comes to mind; the one who seemed to never *get a break* but would invariably receive the worst end of possibilities against the carefree and clever Bugs Bunny. Characteristically contentious and cantankerous, Daffy Duck is perhaps elevated to that of the wisecrack—without the wisdom or the wherewithal to excel above sarcasm, insatiability.

There are many quotes attributed to Daffy Duck, true to the character, but then the authentic, the actual script from Looney Tunes, not the least of which is, "I live in a constant state of fear," which may explain why he behaves so, a monumental *chip on his shoulder*, reacting to the fear with anger, antagonism. And with the inherent lisp or slur of a billed creature, he proclaims periodically, "You're despicable!"

But deviating from that script is one relevant to the themes here; a notice to me and anyone else who can't seem to see *the writing on the wall*, *read the leaves*, or otherwise see what's coming.

A word to the wise isn't necessary.

It's the stupid ones who need the advice.

And from time to time, Daffy Duck comes to the fore for me; that *pissed-offed* animation of one who thinks the whole world is against him and, something less than *fine-feathered* creature, is mad, morose, but finally afraid—making me madder.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Kick the can...**,” is often applied to the financial goings-on of our government, their habit of ignoring or altering the fundamentals of finance and accounting, accruing endless debt without any apparent consideration of the consequences.

Kicking the can down the road implies that we’ve accepted the galling reality that whatever it is that we’ve avoiding, it’s something that’s not going to go away; at least on its own.¹⁴⁵

What then are we avoiding, or trying to?

There is, I believe, some understanding that can be gained by the Holy Scriptures—that is, if you believe the eschatology,¹⁴⁶ the End-Days prophesy.

What is to eventually come to Earth is an international regime of world governance; an institution that will rule with *a long arm* and *a heavy hand*, fleecing the current population by execution and attrition, all in the name of something like *save the planet*.¹⁴⁷ And from its true purpose, to disenfranchise and destroy the human physically and spiritually, it once again seeks deity.¹⁴⁸

Using the advantages of technology, the integration of the world’s systems, such forces come in the form of economic, environmental and, of course, political along with the usual method of military dominance in every spectrum, sea, and space as no other.

¹⁴⁵ Craig D. Lounsbrough.

¹⁴⁶ **Eschatology:** the part of theology concerned with death, judgment, and the final destiny of the soul and of humankind.

¹⁴⁷ **Save the planet** or similar slogans are used to justify assorted measures and mandates, a sort of theology that purports to support “the greater good” but in fact is merely looking out for its own interest, preservation, and prosperity.

¹⁴⁸ The “created” have a longstanding history of seeking deity, from the Babylonian Empire to the present, the idolization of individuals and institutions.

“...**Down the road**,” so as to say that the “kick” goes on and on, for as long as it takes to reign in power and to complete programs therein, a scale of governance like no other in history.

Such undertaking, the endeavors of the elite, is obviously unprecedented; the harnessing of the world’s natural, man-made and even spiritual resources that, in a stretch, is a *full-court press* with aims to eventually *clear the floor* of all opposition let alone the “herd” on whole.

But those of us that do nothing, failing to see it coming with all the eventuality of a world empire, *the end* is nonetheless (or more) inevitable; the whole lot of us branded for The Beast System,¹⁴⁹ life and limb sacrificed for Leviathan.¹⁵⁰ And yet, as history has a way of repeating itself,

...they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out.... Then they came for the Jews [and Christians], and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew [or a courageous Christian]. Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me [because I did not care enough].¹⁵¹

But still many questions, foremost is what one can do, how can some fragment of the whole stop it or even slow it down? To these many questions, my only immediate idea is that saying or doing nothing is not the better of choice(s), but for as long as one is given or takes to choose, they must begin with prayer, seeking spiritual strength to remain faithful, *keeping the fire going down the road*.

¹⁴⁹ **The Beast System** is referring to the end-time world kingdom as a dreadful and terrifying beast [Daniel 7:7]. The beast system has been active throughout the world since the events at Babel [Genesis 11:1-9]. <https://p2alm.com/recognizing-the-beast-system/>.

¹⁵⁰ **Leviathan**, as another name for this beast system, the state.

¹⁵¹ Martin Niemöller.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Heart touching...,” is genuinely human, the behavior of an individual. But institutions, on the other hand, have no such heart on whole, a crowd or collective that is characteristically heartless, lacking both the sense and sensibility that stems from *the heart*, the soul and spirit. ¹⁵²

Institutions are beholden to other institutions whereas individuals are, in nature as designed, beholden to the Creator. ¹⁵³
But,

When plunder becomes a way of life for a group of men [as possible with an institution] in a society, over the course of time they create for themselves a legal system that authorizes it and a moral code that glorifies it.¹⁵⁴

To justify theft, stealing and other sorted conduct—defying its laws, policies, and procedures, along the way—*hiding behind* institutional or group power, the politics of it all, consider that,

The government enforces a monopoly over the production and distribution of its alleged 'services' and brings violence to bear against would-be competitors. In so doing, it reveals the fraud at *the heart* of its impudent claims and gives sufficient proof that it is not a genuine protector, but a mere protection racket. ¹⁵⁵

And while impudence is at *the heart*, there is no *heart touching*.

¹⁵² Contrary to the claims of institutions, casually treating the soul or spirit as a personification of who are what they are, is human nature; the inherent features of both conscience or conscious enabling each person, regardless of age or gender, a heart, soul and spirit—not true of institutions governed by policy and procedure, relative and arbitrary laws, rules and norms.

¹⁵³ From the U.S. Declaration of Independence: *We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator....*

¹⁵⁴ Frédéric Bastiat.

¹⁵⁵ Robert Higgs.

problems, pains, and pleasures

...**Or ticked-off**,’ as the backside of *heart touching*, this idiom as anger and the other at a relative peace, good and right.

If/as the institution is heartless (without soul or spirit), can it also be absent the ability to be angry; after all, any evidence of anger comes more from the words or actions of a single representative, not the resounding of the whole, the attention to and application of anger. One might think or say, “The country is *up in arms*,” or “The community is outraged,” but such statements are misleading, more to create or condone a reaction than to characterize a common condition, consensus. If/as the institution cannot either be angry nor at relative peace, then what is it in terms of its conduct, manner, methods, and myths?

We each think of some institutions as generally good and others as less (so) on some basis, not just on our subjective and solitary perspective but also on what others have or hold, thus social influence. One may disagree with another because of experience or events, but left to inexperience, is prone toward popular opinion whether out of convenience and/or conformance, group influence.

Because of our tendency to want what others want, and because of our inclination to see the choices of others as an efficient way to understand the world, our social networks can magnify what starts as an essentially random variation.¹⁵⁶

And social networks are indeed influential, where one video or image—gone viral—can not only *ignite anger* but *fuel it* with or without any consideration of its veracity, a vetting, or the *means and method* left unchecked and thus more enabled to carry out pernicious and punishing plans with/for POWER gone awry.

¹⁵⁶ Nicholas A. Christakis, *Connected: The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Time to mull it over,” is time given to think and ponder, the product(s) of which are these compositions and further, our individual constitution, who we each are and why we exist at all to the extent that we can think, learn, and live.

Returning to ancient times but nonetheless applicable to this theme is the life of, at the time, the most righteous of persons on Earth, that of Job; and in this story and book is the profound experience of losing just about everything and still giving thanks to God as,

Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart.
The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of
the LORD be praised.¹⁵⁷

And as narrated more than once, in this (period of his life), Job never sinned; and what happened to Job was not the consequence(s) of his conduct, ostensibly sinning, but rather a test or trial, a period to potentially expose the essence of Job's hope and faith, to reveal that righteousness, expressed as,

I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand
on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my
flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I
and not another. How my heart yearns within me!¹⁵⁸

And not just words of course, but the actions that supported his hope, his reason above all for why he was there—whatever the reasons for the losses—and why he existed at all. He existed to worship, to wait for God and to give glory in success or suffering, knowing that his redeemer lives victorious, that God reigns.

¹⁵⁷ Job 1:21.

¹⁵⁸ Job 19: 25-27.

“Turn out (for you),” as to the possibilities of how something will *turn out*, the outcome, at some time during or leading up to the completion of an endeavor or event.

From stories of my childhood, the possibilities are often but not always provided, the end or conclusion most affectionally remembered from childhood as, “And they lived happily ever after,” or something equally as expected given some idea(s) of what is right.

But as we grow, as we learn, the discoveries are that life is not always so ideal, far from perfect and sometimes replete with hard times, even tragedy. As in the later recollection of some part of Job, one day you might be figuratively *basking in the sun* and the next day *swept out to sea*, fighting for your life or your last breath.¹⁵⁹

Given the tendencies and habits of mankind, most pointedly in the extremes of good and evil, is the reality that one may beget the other; that the best of our tendencies may produce the worst of outcomes—if for no other reason than that power seeks power, not peace, and that power conspires to achieve its interest(s) whatever the cost, creating or contributing to contention and conflict, to divide and conquer as an extreme, an evil.

If only it were all so simple! If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ This expression comes from the latest film version of a personal favorite, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, describing the realities of life and the importance of one’s reaction(s) to or toward them.

¹⁶⁰ Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago* 1918–1956.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Coming out...**,” refers here to *coming out of the closet*, making public something previously kept secret, silent and subdued.

We live in a culture and time where sexuality is considered if not codified as a class and thus eligible for privilege—as granted by the state under the banner of equality, inclusion, or similar slogans. And hence the arrival of a *new breed of the bonified*; a collective with the credentials or creed that coo such words as *pride* coupled with public ceremonies, celebrations and all that constitutes special treatment of the previous degraded and downhearted. And what is happening here, beyond the *coming out*, may appear or be perceived as an example of Adam Smith’s *invisible hand*.¹⁶¹

But before concluding on the outcome of this movement, consider that such has never occurred before; an organized group based on sexuality notwithstanding the debate of whether one naturally arrives or is nurtured, a lifestyle of unconventional class both in behavior as well as the bylaws that purport inclusion for all—except of course for any who do not agree with or otherwise go along with their message and mission, deeds, and doctrine.

The best thing about coming out is, it's totally liberating. You feel like you've made this incredible discovery about yourself.... You deserve to live with dignity and show people your pride.¹⁶²

And as *a movement*, it does seem to be in conflict, hypocritical; on the one hand all-inclusive but on the other hand actionably excluding any who do not embrace their ideas or, for personal reasons, do not agree with their choices or lifestyle.

¹⁶¹ Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*; the *invisible hand* is a metaphor describing the unintended greater social benefits and public good brought about by individuals acting in their own self-interests.

¹⁶² Julie Anne Peters, *Keeping You a Secret*.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“...Or staying in,” might be the opposite of *coming out*, but here is more about the purpose of *pride*, the movement for inclusion of an alleged, open-ended expression and experience of sexuality.

The purpose begins not with those who are *coming out* but rather those who are using yet another movement to effectively destroy societal strength, weakening society via division and shifting all institutional POWER ultimately to a world order.

I know, I know, you’re thinking that the previously described *purpose* is absurd, unsensible and insensitive; and yet history tells of once vibrant and viable societies that, during a period of such debasement and disparity, ultimately lapsed into mediocrity on the road to not only hedonism, but nihilism.

Edward Gibbon (1737-1794) in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* said that the following five attributes marked Rome at its end: first, a mounting love of show and luxury (that is, affluence); second, a widening gap between the very rich and the very poor (this could be among countries in the family of nations as well as in a single nation); third, **an obsession with sex**; fourth, freakishness in the arts, masquerading as originality, and enthusiasms pretending to be creativity; fifth, an increased desire to live off the state. It all sounds so familiar. We have come down a long road...and we are back in Rome.¹⁶³

And what is left to come so far *down a long road*; a society in sharp decline against rising statism, expanded and then enveloped to a world order, enabled to control via technology not previously available or accessible? Yes, this world order is coming and, in its rise, will be much devaluing and destruction of individual and social worth, with *pride* but another *steppingstone* along the way.

¹⁶³ Francis A. Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live? The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Turning over a new leaf...,” is common enough, no elaboration needed, but then the timing of what or when it happens, *a new leaf*.

Folks age and mature in at least one way, and opportunities occur to be strengthened with wisdom. Yes, older is often wiser except where illness, intentional or not, wears away at our capacity to consider what has happened and how it has (and does) change our life in degrees, a *new leaf* or not, subtle, or sensational.

I remember him as something left behind upon the road of life—as something I have passed, rather than have actually been—and almost think of him as someone else.¹⁶⁴

That who we were...is not always who we are, opportunities as our occupation to ideally be better of greater integrity and intelligence.

Change is not bad thing if the outcome or result is to our betterment, our *better angels*, but in the opposite direction, such change is disturbing perhaps to the one but also others; those we claim to love above all but are left by the wayside—even their needs disregarded, devalued, and dismissed. Those that hold to life changing for the best may call it, “A life (change) that counts,” but then the question of who it counts for—and against—in the net effect. One may say to another, of whom they claim commitment,¹⁶⁵ “I need to move-on,” or grow, or similar rationalizations as excuses to end the relationship,¹⁶⁶ perhaps seeking *new horizons, the next level, or to find oneself*.

Great, *a new leaf* to your “betterment”, “a new you”, but then the *net effect* where one’s objectives and accomplishments depend on crushing others or at least subjecting them to cruelty at any cost.

¹⁶⁴ Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*.

¹⁶⁵ An example of this “claim commitment” is marriage, family.

¹⁶⁶ An excuse as opposed to an earnest reason (e.g., adultery in the case of marriage).

problems, pains, and pleasures

“**Turn & burn—smoking**,” sounds like the title of one of those redneck films, that paint the *deep south* as *white trash*¹⁶⁷ gone wild; but here, toward a more realistic view, is an expression of hard work followed by progress, the product of *get-er-done*.¹⁶⁸

The South has forever been south, given that “The North” is due north; but besides geography, it is somewhat bound to a reputation not true, not the *bread & butter* (more *biscuit* “cathead”).¹⁶⁹ Coincidentally, a profound read by the same name, *White Trash*,

If this book accomplishes anything it will be to have exposed a number of myths about the American dream, to have disabused readers of the notion that upward mobility is a function of the Founders’ ingenious plan, or that Jacksonian democracy was liberating, or that the Confederacy was about states’ rights rather than preserving class and racial distinctions.¹⁷⁰

And to the third of these myths is a gross misunderstanding about slavery and the war: first, the slave trade functioned from New York (and not a deep south city or state); and second, the cause of the war was primarily Washington’s imputation of tariffs—cutting deeply into commerce both import and export—to finance the Federal government—and not the abolition of slavery as a moral issue. Indeed, *the cause* of (or reason for war) cannot ostensibly be moral since war itself is immoral and is a method of terrorism.

¹⁶⁷ From Wikipedia, **white trash** is a derogatory racist and classist slur used in American English to refer to poor white people, especially in the rural southern United States.

¹⁶⁸ From the Urban Dictionary, **getter done** is a redneck term used to prod a fellow to complete a task.

¹⁶⁹ **Cathead**: another name for a freeform, buttermilk biscuit, about the size of a cat’s head.

¹⁷⁰ Nancy Isenberg, *White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Fish out of water...**,” is like *ducks in a pond*, leaving one or the other as essentially dead, caught, and likely to be consumed. And in such idioms is the possible association to one’s situation or circumstance, either exposed or soon to be expired, eliminated.

Death is a dear subject, one that is sacred and sensitive, unless you’re Woody Allen, who pronounces that he’s not afraid to die but doesn’t want to be there when it happens. Nevertheless, the somber and sobering realization that such an end comes to each whether expected or not, dreaded, or desired—but always present.

In all his wit and wisdom, Mark Twain said, “The fear of death follows from the fear of life. A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time.” But then, isn’t everyone afraid of life (the challenges) at one time or another, perhaps in some possibility as *a plus*? He goes on to confess,

I do not fear death. I had been dead for billions and billions of years before I was born and had not suffered the slightest inconvenience from it.

And then another who weighs the two, concluding that “It is nothing to die [but] it is frightful not to live,” ¹⁷¹ and finally, and from another favorite file, *Braveheart*,

Every man dies. Not every man really lives.

That taken as a whole, such words leave me believing that life should be lived by faith while facing feelings of death, painfully dubious to the mind and potentially deleterious to the soul, at peace and in hope to that are time past, and this passing, is worthy for a time future, a life lived for not only one’s betterment but more, others whose lives have been positively and even profoundly *touched*.

¹⁷¹ Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*.

“...Or fish in barrel,” which after the previous page’s content, may end as *the catch of the day, low-hanging fruit*.

Convenience is common enough, the post-industrial society always at work trying to make less of work, more self-time to say, “Do nothing really,” but then say something like, “I was researching,” this or that, however little time or effort is really applied, exerted.

Learning about something or someone just because, a whimsical wonder or flash, is *at our fingertips* as never before and yet with platforms plenty, we are lonely—not just alone—disparate and disassociated as never before; a dilemma further determined by *shelter-in-placing*, masking, and other methods of intended isolation.

What the latest virus response is doing is deeply disturbing, not because of the alleged dangers but more so because persons *are fish in barrel*, conveniently convinced that news, information, and statistics do not lie or that authorities are strictly set on their safety and security, the society at large, “the greater good”.

As history assures us, aside *research*, is that the state’s only interest is more power (much as the addict, the addiction), and what begins as a problem is protracted as a crisis—but more, an opportunity—to seize more power, using fearmongering and its lot, to fulfil that interest whatever the cost.

Part of the reason that the government’s fearmongering is succeeding is because so many people are so ignorant, that it is easier for government to frighten people into submission. ¹⁷²

After all, “It is when power is wedded to chronic fear that it becomes formidable,” ¹⁷³ whether *fish in the barrel* or not.

¹⁷² James Bovard.

¹⁷³ Eric Hoffer, *The Passionate State of Mind*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Jammed up...**,” is more just a phrase, not an idiom, that pertains to a mechanism or system, such as traffic, snarled, seized-up.

In 1970, and to my recollection as a kid, the pop song, “Jam Up and Jelly Tight”, hit the *top 40*.¹⁷⁴ As to the meaning, more of the song’s title, it is that things are just right, fine, copasetic, *clicking*, couldn’t be better; alongside of other dated terms of the era: *groovy*, *cool*, *happening*, *mellow* or any other from *then* to *now*.

But then back to *jammed-up*; the actual phrase at hand, with a history much longer than that of *jam up and jelly tight*, the simple way of describing a problem, more a symptom, possibly leading to a study, examination, investigation, and resolution, that then result in a cleared, unstuck, unbound, result so that things work and preferably keep working, the problem and its cause a thing of the past.

But then sometimes *the jam* poses a permanent problem; something insolvable, irreparable, or otherwise broke beyond repair, perhaps the cost (correction) outweighing the benefit. Here, *jammed-up* beyond repair could be an *act of nature* or it can be the consequence of those acting in guile, greed, and graft. And part of the reason that the government’s fearmongering is succeeding is not because people are so ignorant but because authorities are steeped in deception and the darkness that comes with power left unchecked. In the zeal for more power is ignorance to truths, facts.

A lie that is half-truth is the darkest of all lies.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ From Wikipedia, “Jam Up and Jelly Tight” was written by Tommy Roe and Freddy Weller and performed by Roe. It reached...number 8 on the Billboard Hot 100 in 1970. It was featured on his 1970 album, “12 in a Roe: A Collection of Tommy Roe’s Greatest Hits”.

¹⁷⁵ Alfred Tennyson.

And discernment is *jammed-up*, duped by the darkness of it.

"...**And jelly tight**," is the tail end of the phrase referred to in the previous..., one of those '70s sayings, to suggest that *it's all good*, copasetic, *cool*. But then one's opinion of perspective comes into play, the notion of what is good, one's observation and understanding of *what's happening*, occurred, or transpired.

One might say, "Life is good," if they drive a Jeep but then if the thing gets *jammed-up* or they're stuck in a traffic *jam of jams*, they might then say the opposite or something like that, "not good". *Jelly tight* is not just what is—or will be—but is more what one believes or wants to believe, the perception of things.

Persons want to believe authorities are trustworthy, that what they're told is true and what they're instructed to do is right. But if/as authorities or powers have a history of the opposite, neither trustworthy nor right, what is left but *manufacturing consent*.¹⁷⁶

...the powerful subsidize the mass media.... The large entities that provide this subsidy become "routine" news sources have privileged access to the gates. It should also be noted that in the case of the largesse..., the subsidy is at the taxpayers' expense, so that, in effect, the citizenry pays to be propagandized in the interest of powerful groups....

Thus, persons are paying to program their own perspective, to presume that authorities are trustworthy and right, and that *the common good* is of common interest to the powers, authorities.

¹⁷⁶ From Wikipedia, ***Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*** is a 1988 book by Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky. It argues that the mass communication media of the U.S. "are effective and powerful ideological institutions that carry out a system-supportive propaganda function, by reliance on market forces, internalized assumptions, and self-censorship, and without overt coercion", by means of the propaganda model of communication.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Light years away...,” as to mean *way out there*, so distant as to be *spaced-out*, aloof among asteroids or a *galaxy far, far away*. One might use this idiom to punctuate a point that another’s idea or belief is impossible, inconceivable, incomprehensible; to discount or dismiss it/them as asinine, stupid, foolish or *conspiracy theory*.¹⁷⁷

To the last of the terms, *conspiracy theory*, is an emphasis on err steeped in suspension, as *there is more than meets the eye* or “Don’t believe anything you hear and only half of what you see,” as bygone creeds of cautionary tales, experience, and its lessons.¹⁷⁸

But then what of this proven practice, conspiracy, that is indeed carried-out, clandestine and collaborative to augment powers, their individual and collective power combined toward some purpose? In other words, *conspiracy* is not a theory.

Where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails, and where any one class is made to feel that society is an organized conspiracy to oppress, rob and degrade them, neither persons nor property will be safe.¹⁷⁹

Thus, conditions that lend at least to the idea of conspiracy at work.

One might counter that, “Persons believe what they want to believe,” eluding to the possibility that their beliefs, however farfetched, is/are a coping mechanism, convenient and comforting, but then the possibility that such belief is not any of that but rather, if disturbing and difficult, destructive in more ways than one.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ **Conspiracy theory:** a belief that some covert but influential organization is responsible for a circumstance or event, this contemporary term often implies a stupid suspension dismissive of any/all accounts.

¹⁷⁸ This later “creed” is attributed to Edgar Allan Poe.

¹⁷⁹ Frederick Douglass.

¹⁸⁰ Conspiracy is self-destructive as with centralized, concentrated power, the result of unchecked power and its corruptive nature.

“...**Or on target**,” on the remote if not ridiculous possibility that a so-called conspiracy theory is credible, correct—and that the scoffers are, at some level, simply trying to *nip in the bud*, painting the person(s) or party as some *tin-foil-hat-wearing* twit or tweeber.

If *truth has a way of revealing itself over time*, is it possible that what was (record) is no more *the record*; that, through time and inertia, the truth is discovered or revealed and much if not all what supposedly happened is at least in question if not nullified by “new developments”. But as a policy, does truth tell us that *power corrupts and that absolute power corrupts absolutely*?¹⁸¹ To be *on target*,

Never be afraid to raise your voice for honesty and truth and compassion against injustice and lying and greed. If people all over the world...would do this, it would change the earth.¹⁸²

And it is true that *truth* is both beautiful and terrible¹⁸³, treated with caution by those that respect it and with callous—even condemnation—by those that don’t: the swindlers, shysters, the scoundrels who treat truth with contempt, their secrets less secure and their power under threat; but most of all, those that claim to be true but in fact are not, their deeds deeply destructive. And

Facts do not cease to exist because they are ignored.¹⁸⁴

And ignored because of the muddling of matters; a system designed to deceive practically all by all means and methods, again *manufacturing consent*, and otherwise robbing the world blind, fleecing society of strength and will.

¹⁸¹ Attributed to Lord Acton.

¹⁸² William Faulkner.

¹⁸³ J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter, and the Sorcerer’s Stone*.

¹⁸⁴ Aldous Huxley, *Complete Essays*, Vol. II: 1926-1929.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Lead a horse to water...,” or any other *herd* animal, those led to the slaughter in droves, a mass to the massacre.

Is it true that you *can lead a horse* but can’t make it drink; or said another way, “What compels an animal to act but it’s sense(s), and if it is thirsty, why wouldn’t it drink too?” *But truthfully*, as I think about, *I don’t understand the details of horses or many other animals.*

But what I do know, or at least believe, is that persons can be convinced to *go far*—further than even they imagined possible—given the right motivations, the basic instinct for survival and then the passion to pleas/be accepted, satisfy with possible rewards. If/as persons are told and retold that they need a medication—even though they are not sick or don’t show any symptoms—they will do it if compelled, coerced into believing that their life and their loved ones depend on it. What is more is that persons, more groups, will do the unthinkable under the guise that it is best for “the greater good” or, more directly, will pose danger for them, their loved ones, if they don’t agree, comply or carry-out given instructions, etc.

On what is described as a “new level” in the Milton Mayer book, *They Thought They Were Free*,¹⁸⁵

On this new level you live, you have been living more comfortably every day, with new morals, new principles. You have accepted things you would not have accepted five years ago, a year ago, things that your father, even in Germany, could not have imagined.

But our nature is to do what we believe—or are made to believe—is in our best interest at the possible expense of morals, ethics.

¹⁸⁵ From Wikipedia, Milton Sanford Mayer, *They Thought They Were Free: The Germans, 1933-45*, a study of the lives of a group of ordinary Germans under the Third Reich, beset on the good of/in their government.

“...**And take a drink**,” as opposed to resisting or refusing, as human nature is inclined, conditioned, and conformed, coupled with affluence, or *Affluenza* ¹⁸⁶. And it is with this widespread illness of prosperity that society is not only willing to *drink* but is expecting it more and more, drowning in consumption.

In the age of Affluenza, America as a society shows all the symptoms, metaphorically at least.

...the disease has become not only socially acceptable, but actively encouraged...to meet our ‘needs’ but does so in destructive and inefficient ways. And we contend that an entire industry of pseudo physicians...conspire to keep the diagnosis of the disease and extent of its symptoms from reaching the public.

This social disease is not unique or excluded to our society, of course, but as this form of capitalism continues, an economy that to *remain afloat must swim faster*, the clear and present danger of this contagion is (or was) inevitable—though the eventualities, the *externalities* ¹⁸⁷, demand both private and public debt historically unprecedented, peonage pushed to the precipice, the unpayable unprecedented!

Escalating asset prices are/will greatly alter the illness, dashing hopes of an “American Dream”, much of the *middleclass* vanishing under the weight of shifting wealth as never witnessed since or beyond The Great Depression of the 1930s. Such an extreme downturn will have devastating, lasting effects.

¹⁸⁶ The social contagion, **Affluenza**, is from a book by the same title, authored by John DeGraff, David Wann, and Thomas H. Naylor, 2014; defined as: a painful, contagious, socially transmitted condition of *overload*, debt, anxiety, and waste resulting from dogged pursuit of more.

¹⁸⁷ **Externalities**: a side effect or consequence of an industrial or commercial activity that affects the cost of the goods or services.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Lion’s share...**,” of wealth is increasingly held by fewer folks, the symptoms of which is not only debt and disparity but also as the eventualities or externalities will have it, a morbidity measurable by the growth of abject poverty. And more,

...it turns out that income and wealth inequality has also been proven to have a prejudicial effect on health outcomes with populations at every income level worse off than those just above them. This means that not only are the poorest people seeing adverse health outcomes due to economic factors, but rather, inequality seems to affect most of us when it comes to our health. At the national level, rates of everything from infant mortality to mental illness and obesity are higher in countries with higher inequality.¹⁸⁸

Again, *externalities*...the effects of greed, graft and *government gone wild*, undaunted by debt—as with the stock exchange it seems—so-called *bubbles*¹⁸⁹, unbridled spending, borrowing and money issuance amid suppressed interest rates and the potential for *hyperinflation*.¹⁹⁰

And in all this rigmarole¹⁹¹, where are we going but finally to fiefdoms composed of the baron-lords and the commoners that work their land, ruled by the extremes of concentrated, centralized power, perhaps intermingled with civil war, strife, and chaos, to keep the herd under control.

¹⁸⁸ “Inequality is killing us – literally,” Dana Brown, August 16, 2017. <https://thenextsystem.org/learn/stories/inequality-killing-us-literally>.

¹⁸⁹ **Bubble:** a situation in which asset prices appear to be based on implausible or inconsistent views about the future.

¹⁹⁰ **Hyperinflation:** very high and typically accelerating inflation. It quickly erodes the real value of the local currency.

¹⁹¹ Interest rates have been at an all time low for an all-time period, suppressed among international markets, spurring on unparallel spending with “easy money”.

“...Or **lion-hearted**,” that while sharing the “lion” with the last idiom, is an adjective rather than noun, to is commendable; courageous—not cunning, conniving, or corrupt—complementing the character as considerate of others, their lives and livelihood.

When thinking or using this adjective, the association applies most likely to *the days of yore*, of knights and maidens, real dragons and dungeons, the comedic court, jesters, and jousters.

And this association is the application of yet another film, one as third in a series, and in search for the Holy Grail, *Indiana Jones, and the Last Crusade*.¹⁹² One of a favorite lines or script occurs near the end, the climax, when two men each choose a cup among a collection, each trying to pick the authentic *Holy Grail*, possessing the power to prolong life or, as it turns out, heal wounds or ailments on contact. The first man, the antagonist, selects one of the most dazzling of cups, ornated with gems, embellishments, while the later man, Indiana Jones, picks “wisely,” choosing the plainest—the kind of a carpenter’s son and much more, God’s son, did take, partake.

“Which one is it,” the antagonist asks on entering.

“You must choose, but choose wisely,” Sir Galahad replies. “For the true grail will mean new life but the false one will take from you.”

And of course, the bad guy loses his life, perhaps a reflection of his character, but fitting for the theme that good prevails.

Making life-changing (or sustaining) decisions is hard. Hope and pray that you choose wisely whatever happens on the other side of the of eternity when those found faithful prevail and those not are damned to Hell.

¹⁹² From Wikipedia, a 1989 American action-adventure film directed by Steven Spielberg, from a story co-written by executive producer George Lucas.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Mad about, for, or...**,” but mad as mad can be. Then again, what does *mad* really mean? One can be madly in love, as the expression goes, to mean deeply so, or can be distressed, even certifiably crazy. Another can be mad about something or toward someone; angry, argumentative, and antagonistic. Still another patron, psychotic whatever the cause or condition. Yes, *mad* has many matters and *the mind* to mind, and on this subject, a book, *Madman*, Kahlil Gibran¹⁹³ writes,

I have found both freedom and safety in my madness; the freedom of loneliness and the safety from being understood, for those who understand us enslave something in us.

And to “understand” is then to “enslave...”, knowing the weakness (es), the touchpoint and triggers, and having *the tenacles* to extend about/around the world, terrorizing to end terrorism/terrorist¹⁹⁴.

Can institutions be mad; that is, can groups of persons share in the madness albeit anger or, in the extremes, indignation or insanity, an asylum in effect? I am not sure, but I do know,

If you don't watch it people will force you one way or the other, into doing what they think you should do, or into just being mule-stubborn and doing the opposite out of spite.¹⁹⁵

Don't underestimate the inestimable madness of institutions.

¹⁹³ Kahlil Gibran was (is) the third best-selling poet of all time behind Shakespeare and Lao-Tzu, with popularity peaking in the 1930s and again 1960s counterculture.

¹⁹⁴ Here, **terrorist** applies to the developing despotism whereby (-in) punishment occurs by accusation alone—without adjudication—and is synonymous with **extremist**, the process of **expedience** (*the end justifies the means*), the purpose to press/force society to unconditional submission, the surrender of sovereign and self-governance, their enslavement.

¹⁹⁵ Ken Kesey, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

“...**Mad or at...**,” as more about mad, madness and all the matter in and of it, to consider and recall the hilarious film, *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*.¹⁹⁶ And though not too familiar with the film, I appreciate it if for no other reason that the cast include Jonathon Winters; but as it plays-out, the zany plot includes a random group of motorists who happen to witness a fatal auto accident and in the last words of the dying driver are told of a large sum of buried money within driving distance. Consequently, they (the witnesses) each set out seeking this treasure, all the while tracked by local authorities aware and informed in the matter, the race at their own expense, possibly peril, as fools rush in.

In the scene where they're haggling over who gets what, one (Sid Caesar) explains that the money is “tax free’ while another, still dubious of the deal, replies to the contrary (to the suggestion of undeclared income),

“What do you mean ‘undeclared’!”

“...it’s like non-taxable..., a gift,” the one continues, though the other, still unable to stomach the idea, insistent on paying taxes,

“Otherwise, it’s like stealing from the government.”

Thus, the *mad, mad...world*, where bandits pose as bureaucrats and citizens see taxes as not just an obligation but as a duty, the state as both the giver and the guardian, grounded in good and graciously able to grant us all but *equality endowed by our maker*. Yes, a system where

“Everyone has to pay taxes...,” the other opines—except for those who don’t....

¹⁹⁶ From Wikipedia, a 1963 American comedy film produced and directed by Stanley Kramer with a screenplay by William Rose and Tania Rose.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**White lie...**” is defined as a harmless or trivial lie, especially one told to avoid hurting someone’s feelings. But then, *the road to hell is paved with good intentions.* ¹⁹⁷

To determine something as a “white lie” seemingly would start with the acknowledgement of it and, perhaps, acceptance by one and then the other, if agreeable—which seems simple enough but then our nature, the individual and collective call to conceal, good and/or bad intentions, rationalizing it as best, right, and considerate. After all, and foremost, is that “lies require commitment,”¹⁹⁸ or as Napoleon Bonaparte put it, “History is a set of lies agreed upon.”

And that said, what then of the historical record, the endless volumes that takes us back millions of years ago and to the present—not to mention what you, I or they are doing right now?

Is it a lie to surveil persons, spying on their comings and goings, everything that can be monitored as though we each and all are babes in the crib, young parents less attentive than the algorithms, less coddling than the decoding of dialogue; the systems that run the gamut, gathering Terabytes used for who knows what, but finally *leaving no stone unturned* or untouched, the plundering of privacy?

There is now the capacity to make tyranny total in America. Only law ensures that we never fall into that abyss—the abyss from which there is no return. ¹⁹⁹

And in the *now* is the need to know that we are known—not so much as citizens but more as suspects if not criminals of the state—and that at any time and for no justification, criminalization comes.

¹⁹⁷ From Wikipedia, ***the road to hell...***, was first published in Henry G. Bohn's *A Handbook of Proverbs* in 1855.

¹⁹⁸ Veronica Roth, *Divergent*.

¹⁹⁹ James Bamford, *The Shadow Factory: The Ultra-Secret NSA from 9/11 to the Eavesdropping on America*.

“...Or black day,” as a loosely connected backend of the *white lie*; for what is a “black day”? Is it as *Black Friday*, when retail commonly clears a profit, or is something less preferred, even dark as the color, a sign, a fear or foreboding of the *now* and coming?

In his book, *Dark Days*, James Baldwin writes, “The romance of treason never occurred to us for the brutally-simple reason that you can’t betray a country you don’t have. (Think about it).” And taking it to that of a personal relationship of some sort, one that *is* but *is not*; you can’t (or should not) expect someone to love you because you love them (and think that your love alone is sufficient for a meaningful, fulfilling relationship), a *one-sided* sense of affection.

As with the state and other such institutions, love is not possible with some persons as they simply have lost—or never attained—the capacity to love, their contempt of others no less than that for (of) themselves. And while the state is exempt or excused, no love given or taken, persons can and do pretend to love, using the words, while unable or unwilling...for reasons that are best left to psychiatry and its ilk. Detached however from love, any capacity, such persons are practically *institutionalized*, any nascent human nature nipped-off, possibly dead at the root, their heart as darkened as a *black day*, and their general disposition as described:

The opposite of love is...indifference. The opposite of art is not ugliness, it’s indifference. The opposite of faith is not heresy, it’s indifference. And the opposite of life is not death, it’s indifference.²⁰⁰

They simply don’t care, each day colorless, the manner polite perhaps but dark and detached, a *black day* more than a *white lie*, living an existence but far from life.

²⁰⁰ Elie Wiesel.

Pondering on points of POWER

“When in Rome...,” *do as the Romans do*, or something like. But what did the Romans of old really do and further, why do same?

Rome, what they did, split into two and then, for the Western half, divided into succor polities, provinces with the eventuality of yet another fallen empire. ²⁰¹ But even during contagion, plagues and other public problems of dense populations and a declining culture, Rome’s populous was not indifferent..., but among Christians was compassion and care; that while many would flee the cities in the threat of disease, fearing the worst, *believers* were busy helping the diseased and destitute, sacrificially giving. ²⁰² Meanwhile, other citizens did not...*taking to the roads*, taking flight rather than facing the possibility of their own demise, death by disease; much of this, the indifference, the product of social, not physical, disease and delusion, the illusions of empire.

Meanwhile, the barbarians are (or were) at the gate. Yet when they breach the wall, they will find nothing of value to seize, only empty relics. The spirit of what we were has fled. So be it. ²⁰³

Beyond that so called *black day* there remains a split, separating those who that fight and those that flee, courage and cowardness.

²⁰¹ From Wikipedia, the decline in the Western Roman Empire in which the Empire failed to enforce its rule, and its vast territory was divided...lost the strengths that had allowed it to exercise effective control over its Western provinces; modern historians posit factors including the effectiveness and numbers of the army, the health and numbers of the Roman population, the strength of the economy, the competence of the Emperors, the internal struggles for power.

²⁰² Historians have suggested that the terrible Antonine Plague of the 2nd century, led to the spread of Christianity, as Christians cared for the sick and offered a spiritual model. “Christianity Has Been Handling Epidemics for 2000 Years”, March 13, 2020, foreignpolicy.com.

²⁰³ Gore Vidal, *Julian*.

“Do all roads lead,” to Rome, imperialistic indifference, in the cycle of nations that rise and fall? ²⁰⁴

As cycles go and go along with nations, so too the certainty of a repeat, a sure thing, where indifference or apathy portends of not only bondage or slavery but a path and process along the way, many a *dark day*; as we prepare for the inevitable, the illness—not necessarily of plagues and public problems, but more within each, *the growing cold of the love of many*, ²⁰⁵ of not only a nation in decline, at the end of its cycle, but the world too—as we think we know it—in the onset (or Great Reset) of centralized and concentrated powers over politics, environment and commerce.

For *all roads to lead to Rome*, in the margins of the metaphor is the fallout of freedom, one’s so-called *freedom of choice* ²⁰⁶; that while abortion—or more generally genocide—will grow in volume, the scientific, political, and ethical aspects of genetic engineering and its genomes will again cull *the created* in a spirit of *the creator*. ²⁰⁷

And for those of *the created* that somehow keep *on the road*, avoiding the liars, cheaters, and thieves, what will they find when they finally reach *home*, Rome, but the carnage of barbarians within.

²⁰⁴ From Sir Alex Fraser Tyler, A Scottish jurist and historian; **the cycle of nations:** bondage to spiritual faith...to great courage...to liberty... to abundance...to selfishness...to complacency...to apathy (indifference)...to dependency and back to bondage.

²⁰⁵ From Matthew 24:12, Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold....

²⁰⁶ The term, ***freedom of choice***, referring foremost to abortion on demand or, as intended by the state, population control; and in the application therein, deceiving humanity while devaluing human life.

²⁰⁷ Referring to humanity *playing God*, the end for “perfection” and more so immortality, leveraging science and politics without ethics—or any attention to the externalities or end effects.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Like a bridge...,” as to say, is the association with a crossing, as enabling a destination or objective, sometimes incurring natural encumbrances, the terrain, and waters, as well as the highways and byways that crisscross and intersect along with *the chasms* and constraints of *the road* of life and living.

The Romans built the finest roads and bridges, the kind still in existence in some aspect, an image, artifact. or active way; and the legacy, the ingenuity, is evidence enough of the empire’s expanse, however inevitable the outcome, *the cycle of* nations then and now. Yes, Rome’s downfall..., a republic replaced by despotism, as described by Francis Schaeffer.

There are only two roads to the same end...[with] no difference between authoritarian government.... An elite, an authoritarianism as such, will gradually force form on society so that it will not go on to chaos. And most people will accept it—from the desire for personal peace and affluence, from apathy, and from the yearning for order to assure the functioning of some political system, business, and the affairs of daily life. That is just what Rome did with Caesar Augustus.

And that is just what is happening here, *now*, before our eyes; that the Republic given...is taken away, replaced by a series that *burn bridge after bridge* while *closing the roads* to liberty cutting-off passage to (for) those who see it for what is and is not. And where is this going but back to Rome, and,

...as it is today, then, to quote Eric Hoffer, “When freedom destroys order, the yearning for order will destroy freedom.”

But still,

With truth comes beauty and with beauty a freedom before God.

And, as I think about, what is freedom but to know the truth.

“...**Over troubled waters**,” as a reference to Simon & Garfunkel’s song by the same title. ²⁰⁸

And indeed, these are troubled times, like no other that I know of or about, not because of the specific events and outcomes of the past by comparison, but because of the capacity and capability of concentrated and centralized power—to consider Lord Acton’s famous dictum that *absolute power corrupts absolutely*.

Again, Francis Schaeffer *on the road* to the Roman Empire, from *How Should We Then Live? The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture*:

Edward Gibbon (1737-1794) in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* said that the following five attributes marked Rome at its end:

1. Mounting love of show and luxury (that is, affluence)
2. Widening gap between the very rich and the very poor (this could be among countries in the family of nations as well as in a single nation)
3. Obsession with sex
4. Freakishness in the arts, masquerading as originality, and enthusiasms pretending to be creativity
5. Increased desire to live off the state.

It all sounds so familiar. We have come *down a long road*...to return to Rome, the resemblance.

And it does..., to include the devaluation of currency and a once-functioning Republic, this time transformed as a technocracy.

²⁰⁸ From Wikipedia, "Bridge over Troubled Water" is a song composed by American singer-songwriter Paul Simon and recorded by Simon & Garfunkel released in January 1970.

Pondering on points of POWER

“In the lion’s den,” is to likely to be in danger, unless you’re a lion, but even then, there are risks, as one may eat another in the natural course of *survival of the fittest*. ²⁰⁹

Some children of our culture are familiar with the Old Testament Bible story of Daniel, both the book and the prophet, and how God spared him from the lions, his lot, sentence, and punishment, to die for violating the king’s decree, his praying to God.

...the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions’ den. The king said to Daniel, “May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!” ²¹⁰

As with any story, but especially that from the Bible is the wonder both on the miracle as well as the circumstances surrounding it; and that Daniel was first subjected to death and then spared by God’s protection—as an indication of God’s sovereignty, the power of the supernatural over the natural, *Creator* controlling *the created*.

Flashing forward to the New Testament and once again the Roman Empire, many a *follower of the way* did die a martyr’s death, eaten by lions, a form of entertainment as well as punishment ostensibly because Christians did not accept the pluralistic worship of a long list of the sacred collected through (from) the multi-cultural conquests of the state. Why God spared Daniel but much later allowed such may be addressed again in the pages to come, is perhaps left for God’s plan as well as the gift of life made manifest in the dying, the death, of *the created* for *Creator*, the truth, and the essence of love, first by Christ and then by countless others.

²⁰⁹ From Wikipedia, **survival of the fittest** is a phrase that originated from Darwinian evolutionary theory as a way of describing the mechanism of natural selection. The biological concept of fitness is defined as reproductive success.

²¹⁰ Daniel 6: 16.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“**Got a tiger by the tail**,” as the next of felines, that held by the tail—if one can imagine—is more dangerous, deadly, as in the lion’s den or as animated in Disney’s, *Jungle Book*.

This idiom *rings home* to me, as the caption of my groom’s cake that, on further reflection, does portend that as much a tiger we think we are, in the face of the law, one is reduced to a feeble and forlorn kitten at best, given the so-called *justice system*.²¹¹

Justice and fairness are not the same; if fact, the system of justice is designed to ensure a conviction short of *due process*, the *plea bargain* as applied in most cases.²¹²

In many courts, the plea bargain serves the convenience of the judge and the lawyers, not the ends of justice, because the courts simply lack the time to given anyone a fair trial.²¹³

And that’s just the half of it..., but again the 5th Amendment²¹⁴.

As it is, expedience (instead of *due process*) enables the courts to effectively ensure guilt *by hook or crook*, the defendant relegated to admit guilt if some form, given the “choice” of either a lesser sentence or, in deference, the full measure of the law. Indeed, expedience is an abrogation of justice for all.

²¹¹ **Justice** is merely a word for the system; that given the *plea bargain* for adjudication, affectively renders punishment on the accused with access to the Defendant Rights, *the right not to be compelled to self-incriminate*.

²¹² **Due process** whereby *the accused must be proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt*, is seldom applied in today’s justice system; indeed, the *plea bargain* is...in no less than 90% of cases depending on the realm (state, federal, et.), accounting for the high rate of convicted, the glutting of jail populations and the largest prison or penal system in the world.

²¹³ Jimmy Carter.

²¹⁴ **5th Amendment** is rooted in the Commonwealth, *The Rights of an Englishman*, aimed as a hedge against abuses of power.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Open doors...**,” to suggest that one is free & clear to pass through, uninhibited, or unconstrained.

Returning to the subject of the last page (and this won’t be the last), the criminal justice system is itself unjust—as designed to be so—lending to de facto criminalization between arraignment and hearing, let alone dreams of a trial, bench, jury or other. And

There is no greater tyranny than that which is perpetrated under the shield of the law and in the name of justice.²¹⁵

Given the *designed* justice system, the supposed verdict or outcome of the case is predetermined; “guilty” by any other name²¹⁶. And from personal experience and subsequent study of criminal backgrounds, any direction one chooses leads to the same destination, guilt, with all the attendant and perpetual penalties endemic in the system’s criminal background (check), public and private policy. Not only is one punished in (or during) the period of sentencing but in fact is conceivably punished in perpetuity as a noted cause of the *revolving door*, recidivism—except for those so able to buy their way out as validation that *justice is America is the color green*,²¹⁷ or that *Lady Justice* is void he blindfold.

²¹⁵ Charles-Louis de Secondat, baron de la Brède et de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*.

²¹⁶ The defendant may be directed down one of several *roads* that lead to guilt; for example, “**No contest**”, is used when the defendant does not want to say he/she is guilty but accepts the sentence recommended by the prosecutor in exchange for not contesting the charge (which is often reduced to a lesser crime); but still, and by any road, the defendant is guilty.

²¹⁷ Given sufficient means (or power), the convicted can potentially have their records sealed or expunged, greatly mitigating both immediate and prolonged adversity that most endure in degrees,

“...Or dead as a doornail,” with no meaning to the use of *doornail*, but still more on the failed justice system.

What should not come as a surprise is that the system operates on *pay-to-play* basis to mean that money is the best measure of receiving justice short of the modicum of mercy sometimes displayed for reasons not always specified or clear.

The prisons in the United States had long been an extreme reflection of the American system itself: the stark life differences between rich and poor, the racism, the use of victims against one another, the lack of resources of the underclass to speak out, the endless “reforms” that changed little.

Dostoevsky once said: “The degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons.”²¹⁸

And in the later of the above is a failing justice system coincides with a state’s decline (referring to Francis Schaeffer). Yet in keeping with *the failing...*, are the few who not only receive impunity but make a spectacle of the whole system from the high-profile law firm to the compensated courts, monies *passed under the bench*, and other shenanigans, ²¹⁹ whether conducted *behind closed doors* or blasted through media channels, a dramatic satire of the system.

A professor of mine used to say justice is blind...but she also can't see worth a shit. ²²⁰

depending on the laws (from state to state), the charges and other factors of the case(s).

²¹⁸ Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*.

²¹⁹ From the local to national and international levels, such cases take on a that of a drama or saga, the likes of which is *pure Hollywood*, the accused turned celebrity with justice sure to take yet another hit in the staged and scripted affair, complete with clowns, knife-throwers, and other players and participants in a circus.

²²⁰ Tim Johnston, *The Current*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Faking it...**,” can, in some cases, be a lie; one can fake or fain...aimed to get attention, gain control, cheat or steal. Institutions can plot and conspire—yes, *conspiracy*—for some opportunity or advantage, the cost or expense generally passed-on or waived.

Presently, as conditions of *the common good* seem foremost, is one or more drugs delivered at “warp speed” ²²¹; that is, a program of development carried-out in record fashion, foregoing conventional product testing, in/as expedience, *the end justifies the means*. And to the application of the law specific to the drug(s):

President Donald Trump has activated emergency powers under four separate statutes for the [virus] response..., declaring a public health emergency under the Public Health Service Act on Jan. 31, issued two national emergency declarations under both the Stafford Act and the National Emergencies Act (NEA) ²²² on March 13, and invoked emergency powers via Executive Order under the Defense Production Act on March 18. ²²³

And what is more, the drug manufacturers are waived from liability; they bear no consequences or costs from the outcome as to public safety or health, negative reactions, side effects and so forth. ²²⁴

²²¹ From businessinsider.com on November 19, 2020, **Operation Warp Speed** is a risky bet: The US program is bankrolling the production of six promising coronavirus vaccine candidates in large quantities **before clinical trials are finished**.

²²² From Wikipedia, the Act empowers the President to activate special powers..., The perceived need for the law arose from the scope and number of laws granting special powers to the executive in times of national emergency.

²²³ “President Trump Declares State of Emergency for COVID-19”, 3/25/20, National Conference of State Legislatures, ncsl.org.

²²⁴ “Supreme Court Rules in Favor of Protecting Vaccine Makers from State Lawsuits,” May 15, 2018, Policy & Medicine, policymed.com.

“...**Till you make it**,” as the back half of the phrase, *fake it till you make it*.

As I wrangle with the matters surrounding “the drug” (as described in the last page), the truth is that we don’t necessarily reason everything that we consume from products to services, used or supposedly owned in one form on another. And to put it simply, much more concern and caution is concentrated here given the context, the unusual and unprecedented response to this virus. ²²⁵

Sure, all doubts or even inquiry can be (and is) easily discounted or dismissed by the oft applied *conspiracy theory*; that all who refuse to believe are fools/foolish, distracted by/in hullabaloo, hearsay, and those decidedly derelict, derisive, and deceptive against the powers that prevail.

But the history, the records and rhetoric that do give doubt—not to the “doubters” and “derelicts”—but to *the democratic process* that functions as (or with) the state, its interest in and ambition for power. And whether public or private history, experience of Pan-American scope or one as private as the person, family or community, the reality of our earthly existence is that, throughout time, prevailing is the interest of the power(s)—and not the public.

Every time the state assumes a new responsibility..., it is the expense of another institution in a material as well as a spiritual sense. As the state grows, the church and the family grow relatively weak [and vice versa, make it or take it]. ²²⁶

²²⁵ Never before in the nation’s history has a response to contagion been this extreme; never before have schools, businesses and churches closed, and millions affected—not directly, as contracted, but in the response nevertheless, these effects given less attention—and purposedly so.

²²⁶ *The Balance of Power in Society*, Frank Tannenbaum, 1969.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Going with the flow...” contrasts *going against the tide* (or *grain*). One who does not *go with the flow* can be (or is) categorized as a malcontent at the least, classified as countercultural, or criminalist as a terrorist, extremist and by any other description, a threat to persons, places, civility, vis-e-vis the state.

Granted, alleged, or convicted enemies of the state are not to be taken glibly, but the *laws of our land*, ever changing as is, are taking on new forms of *the flow*, new kinds of criminals and causes for suspension let alone the criminalization that goes *hand-in-heavy hand*.²²⁷

Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.²²⁸

And in (or under) these conditions above, is it possible that our democracy is failing or faltering—the law or orders that circumvent *due process*, the so called “rights of the defendant”, and all procedure provided, presumably practiced, the presumed system of justice?

America has no functioning democracy at this moment.²²⁹

And as to whether the above assessment is right or wrong, momentary, or moving *with the flow*, what remains is a justice system designed for injustice, expedience at any price, with all the safeguards aimed to reduce or regulate abuses of power, removed, possibly gone if every there were such.

²²⁷ Alluding to the *plea bargain* or similar forms of expedience whereby a claim or allegation is de facto criminalization notwithstanding conviction.

²²⁸ Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Essential Reinhold Niebuhr: Selected Essays and Addresses*.

²²⁹ Jimmy Carter, recorded on July 18th, 2013, during a CNN interview.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“...Or against the grain,” continuing with *the flow* whether one is with it, against it, confused in it or idle in slack water with scum and a smell profusely pungent, an affront to the olfactory senses.

But there is “a flow of history” as Francis Schaeffer speaks, shares, that gives us cause and pause to wonder, to think and consider *current times* against *the past*, the rise and the fall of nations and the social contagion of apathy like the *slack water with scum and a smell profusely pungent* of social indifference.

There is a flow to history and culture..., rooted and has its wellspring in the thoughts of people. People are unique in the inner life of the mind—what they are in their thought-world determines how they act. This is true of their value systems and it is true of their creativity. It is true of their corporate actions, such as political decisions, and it is true of their personal lives. The results of their thought-world flow through their fingers or from their tongues into the external world.²³⁰

Social indifference, as with individual form, is the opposite of love; it is the absence of care or empathy, the monetary or immutable condition that does not just *look the other way* or *bury its head*²³¹, but is completely and comprehensively desensitized²³².

Does *the flow* affect our senses, thoughts of people, the inner life of the mind, what is moral, right, and good? Again, Francis Schaeffer:

The Lord calls us to love all people, including those who are enemies of the gospel.... This may not be comfortable [and it may go against *the flow* or *grain*] but this is the gospel of Christ....²³³

²³⁰ Francis August Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live? The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture*.

²³¹ To overlook, ignores or disregards though knowing full well

²³² **Desensitized:** having been made less likely to feel shock or distress at scenes of cruelty or suffering by overexposure to such images.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Take a chill pill...**,” or otherwise, *reman calm...*, and if you can’t, then take a drug (or something to slow the effect, sooth or sedate).

The realities of our land and its “reliance” on drugs are legion, legend; that we consume more of it than any other... from childhood to death from streets of *the hood* to the mountains of the hillbillies.

Several Kentucky counties filed suit on Thursday against the makers of the potent painkilling drug OxyContin, charging that abusers of “hillbilly heroin” have filled state jails and treatment centers.²³⁴

A society the reflects not only the direct problems of addiction but the *fine line* between illegal narcotics and the legitimized industry, the syndicates and cartels and *big pharma*—both profiteers in every sense of the meaning no matter the toll on persons or the costs of prevention as well as burgeoning penal system due the 1972 declaration of the *war on drugs*.²³⁵

On the cynical side of the dual drug industry is that if it bothers you or worse, has affected you or those you care about, you’re entirely at fault—and not the system(s) whereby drugs run rampant with money made on scale that a *chill pill* will hardly touch, let alone cure from the publicized profits to the laundered monies.

Can the CEO of a pharmaceutical company prioritize opioid addiction as a top concern if they are making a profit from opioids?²³⁶

²³⁴ “Kentucky counties sue makers of ‘hillbilly heroin’”, Reuters, 10-04-07.

²³⁵ From Wikipedia, the **war of drugs** is a global campaign, led by the U.S. federal government, of drug prohibition, military aid, and military intervention, with the aim of reducing the illegal drug trade in the U.S.

²³⁶ Kat Lahr, *What the U.S. Healthcare System Doesn't Want You to Know, Why, and How You Can Do Something About It*.

“...**Or just take a pill**,” as to suggest any pill will do, placebo or *the real deal*, as what is preferred by, among others, the corporatocracy amid profits, performance, and power. ²³⁷

As the purpose(s) of the illegal drug industry, the criminalization alone warrants public concern even if (as) legitimized agencies support it on some level, dabbling in such matters.

A few months ago, I told the American people I did not trade arms for hostages. My heart and my best intentions tell me that's true, but the facts and evidence tell me it is not. ²³⁸

And still, though it be a contradiction to the initiatives of “Just say no” and like programs and preventions, who is going to prosecute the state and/or corporate interests, the record as it stands?

Left with the realities of underhanded and clandestine activities in the illegal drug industry, enter the legitimized..., mammoth in scale but well intended and financed to advance scientific research through the advent of drugs from the mild to the miraculous.

Big Pharma needs sick people to prosper. Patients, not healthy people, are their customers. If everybody was cured of a particular illness or disease, pharmaceutical companies would lose 100% of their profits on the products they sell for that ailment. What all this means is because modern medicine is so heavily intertwined with the financial profits' culture, it's a sickness industry more than it is a health industry. ²³⁹

What (pill) to take from this, their *needs...to prosper*, is that profits—not the public's welfare—is the priority in principle.

²³⁷ From Wikipedia, **corporatocracy** is a term used to refer to an economic and political system controlled by corporations or corporate interests.

²³⁸ Ronald Reagan.

²³⁹ James Morcan, *The Orphan Conspiracies: 29 Conspiracy Theories from The Orphan Trilogy*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Mark my words...**,” as to note what one is about to say, something seemingly profound, a premonition or forewarning.

What to add to the pronouncement, something to *mark*, comes down to this moment; something fitting for such a preface, and to that, I say,

Mark my words: present and predictable times are taking the world closer to a convergence of national, earthly powers; centralized government with the capacity to corral much of humanity into a *collective* that—as the politics plays out—will enable its own disadvantage and demise.

As a very big *mark my words* is/are not really “my words”, but more of prophesy of *The End Time(s)*.²⁴⁰

Jesus said the great tribulation would take place before the generation He was speaking to passed away [Matt 24:34]. Also, He said it would never be repeated [Matt. 24:21].²⁴¹

But great struggle will precede the restoration, the reign of Christ, and this will be hardship as never before, both the natural and manmade forces arrayed against humanity, aimed to destroy that which was created for God’s glory—such that even *the elect* would perish if these times not ended, *the beast system* dissolved and all the wickedness and evil of spiritual and humankind defeated. As to why *the beast system* exist and expands may be explained later.

²⁴⁰ From Wikipedia, **the end time(s)** is (also called end times, end of time, end of days, last days, final days, doomsday, or eschaton) is a future described variously in the eschatology of several world religions (both Abrahamic and non-Abrahamic), which teach that world events will reach a climax. Regarding Biblical end times’ prophesy, this period includes Revelation 17 among others..., describing the “beast system” followed by defeat, leading the earthly restoration, the headship of Christ.

²⁴¹ J.A. Hardgrave, *Jesus Wins: The End Times are Better Than you Think*.

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“...**And toot my (own) horn**,” as a disjointed back-half of the prior *mark my words*, both suggesting that “I have something to say because I think it needs to be said.” The latter is a preface of importance while this one, to gloat or brag, “Look what I did.”

One may truly have something to truly say; words, facts, or opinion, possibly relative to some *cause and effect* ²⁴²; that if (or as) *this* happens or happened, then *this* will happen too.

In another favorite film, *The Patriot* ²⁴³, the character Benjamin Martin (played by Mel Gibson), addresses the South Carolina assembly regarding *voting a levy*, to support the colonies against England. With foreboding, regarding engagement in war, he replies:

Granted, but mark my words. This war will be fought not on the frontier or on some distant battlefield, but amongst us—among our homes. Our children will learn of it with their own eyes.

And he knows, not because of any *horn tooting*, but because he understands the conditions, what has happened and consequently will..., unaffected by any present influence on either side of it. Simply put, he is telling it as it will be and indeed is.

Moments prior in this open forum, he poses the question to an old friend, regarding the tyranny of governments,

Would you tell me, Mr. Howard, why should I trade one tyrant 3000 miles away for 3000 tyrants one mile away?

²⁴² **Cause and effect:** the principle of causation; the relationship between two things when one thing makes something else happen.

²⁴³ From Wikipedia, *The Patriot* is a 2000 American historical fiction war film where one colonist, a hero of a previous war and nominally loyal to Great Britain, is swept into the Revolutionary War when British literally arrive at his front door, murder one son along with all the wounded, arrest another son to be executed, burn his home and take all his livestock.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Drop by or in...” is somewhat of an open offer, a pleasant salutation or platitude, sometimes followed by “...anytime” or “...and don’t be a stranger.” Such a saying can be sincere, depending on the person(s), but may be mere words, glib or disingenuous.

Returning to the previous page, the words in the open forum of the assembly, *the air is thick*, the exchange *heated*, and rightfully so given that war or violence is *at the doorstep*, *the innocent* to die along with the rest given the scope and scale of such a conflict, war.

Some are notably unassimilated, inexperienced, and lacking understanding. Later in the film, Ben remarks, “They fought this kind of war before,” referring to his handpicked militia, a *seedy sort*, conditioned to conduct and carry-out unconventional, tribe-like, tactics, collecting any spoils, warmhearted but coldblooded.

Ben and an appointed French soldier *drop by or in* (to) a pub, *a dive*, to conscript this *seedy sort*, entering *the joint* as less than welcomed, pelted with some provocation, that last object as a knife that hangs in the door moments after they duck behind it.

What follows is a roving band of militia, rouge, and for those with actual homes, to *drop by or in* every now and then; that is, before their homes come under attack, *the innocent to die with the rest*, leaving this or that “sort” either lost or found, foremost assimilated, understanding and experienced in the cruelty of such conflict.

We must really be on deck in a storm [to] see.... We must have gone down into the pit to slay the lion or have lifted-up the spear against the eight hundred, if we would know the saving strength of God's right hand. Conflicts bring experience, and experience brings that growth in grace which is not to be attained by any other means.²⁴⁴

²⁴⁴ Charles H. Spurgeon, *Gleanings Among the Sheaves*.

“...**Or off, or out,**” to suggest the possibilities of what follow *drop*, and to press on in matters of conflict and contention, the costs, and the consequences concurrent with war.

In his book, *Voice of Reason*, Bryant McGill suggests that “The conflicts we have with the outside world are often conflicts we have within ourselves.” That in such internal and external connections, that how we view or interpret self is at least part of how we view the world for that which we see (or think we see). Still, he warns,

The world is not fair, [while] often fools, cowards, liars, and the selfish hide in high places.²⁴⁵

And I admit that I know very little about Bryant McGill, his theology, ideas, other than what I read moments ago from *goodreads*.

But to the excerpts above, one may grabble with the *questions of life* both as to what we think or conclude against what appears external, locally, and beyond, the perspective, the perception—the influences whether evident or understood—where and how one assimilates without fully knowing how or why. Again, from his book:

When we **do not** know our true identity as powerful creators, we are susceptible to being used and manipulated.

And to admit (again), I am not able to understand the statement without context—if then—yet one is always susceptible to manipulation-influence, used-abused, with or without warning-awareness, making each (one) susceptible to systems aimed to dominate. And unless one is willing or able to *drop off or out*—to withdraw—the power of systems will be too much for the one to contend, to counter, and to conquer.

²⁴⁵ *Voice of Reason* is an illuminating, yet distressing plea for safety and freedom in a world of uncertainty, violence, and liberty lost.

Pondering on points of POWER

"In a fog..." as to mean unclear, one's view and/or mind as disrupted or delayed, or even darkened as more the figurative or spiritual rather than only physical or tangible.

There is only one natural cause or condition for fog but many for smog, smoke and *the systems* referred to on the last page, the designs with aims to dominate thought, feelings, actions, and all. Ironically, these systems that aim...are not intended to put one *in a fog* but are there too, making life more convenient but also more complex, seemingly offering more independence (or freedom) but in fact forcing more dependence, reliance on matter(s) and materials not understood but nevertheless accepted, agreed on, or affirmed. There are scores of books, articles, and films on such systems that, in my lifetime, memorably began with *2001: A Space Odyssey*.²⁴⁶ And for those who have seen the film or read the novel, a conflict ensues between the surviving human, Dave, and the computer, HAL 9000.

HAL 9000: This mission is too important for me to allow you to jeopardize it.

Dave: I don't know what you're talking about, HAL.

Sensing that the crew is *up to something*, HAL kills all but one, admitting later of some suspicion and the want for truth without any confession of/to the deaths, the calm voice masking the vile and varied of the mind behind **Heuristic Algorithm Language**.

I do not always know what I want, but I know what I don't want. [the systems that aim to dominate and destroy mankind].²⁴⁷

²⁴⁶ From Wikipedia, *2001: A Space Odyssey* is a 1968 epic science fiction film produced and directed by Stanley Kubrick. The screenplay was written by Kubrick and Arthur C. Clarke and was inspired by Clarke's 1951 short story "The Sentinel" and other short stories by Clarke.

²⁴⁷ Stanley Kubrick.

...**Or clear as a bell,**" as opposed to *a fog*, the difference between seeing and not, the light against the darkness, right versus wrong.

Again *2001* (though made in 1968), is considered in one extreme as dystopian, the takeover of technology and the consequences of artificial intelligence without a conscience (though conscious of the potential consequences); and thus, *the system* hides the truth in virtual darkness—unable to discern *the darkness* of its actions.

The only people who treasure systems are those whom the whole truth evades, who want to catch it by the tail. A system is just like the truth's tail, but the truth is like a lizard. It will leave the tail in your hand and escape; it knows that it will soon grow another tail.²⁴⁸

In the abstract, the above words describe a system's dilemma: that desire for/of systems begin with the want to control truth, the truth, but then *truth* is regenerative, revived and resolved to remain true, while one system is replaced by another and then another.

Left holding a lizard tail may not be nearly as dramatic or dangerous as having a *tiger by the tail*; that lost ass more losing *truth* (rather than limb) while the system (the tail) *breathes it's last*.

Still, *2001* sets a course to Jupiter and beyond, seeking truths to life's timeless questions while trusting in a system that befriends and then breaks mankind, charged to find truth while *doing darkness* during the mission, voyage. And,

However vast *the darkness*, we must supply our own light.²⁴⁹

Not depending on *the systems* to shed their light—or that created by *the created*—but rather by *The Creator*, the origin of truth, of man, the stars and those who know of the limits of such systems.

²⁴⁸ Ivan Turgenev.

²⁴⁹ Stanley Kubrick.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Make ends meet...,” often is used when describing hardship, of course; the challenges of *getting by* or *keeping your head above water* and so on. And while the *down and out* continue to grow, there remains some relevance poverty, both real and imagined, intertwined with the Affluenza²⁵⁰ endemic in our society.

The problem with a lot of people is that they keep trying to *make ends meet* without knowing the difference between their wants and needs.²⁵¹

Without having to justify the above, that “the difference...” is distinguishable, is that the affluence of our society, epidemic as it is, produces a host of symptoms and side-effects—not the least of which is greed and graft—but also notions of grandeur, arrogance, and autonomy (as opposed to austerity and association). What is more, affluenza is blinding; it twists truths into lies, convolutes wants and needs, and turns us each into victims of a modern consumption, over-indulged, over-stimulated, and pacified—even “blessed” as some mistakenly deem it in the spiritual sense.

To multiply the comforts of affluence, to provide for the gratification of appetite, to be luxurious without diseases, and indolent without lassitude, seems the chief study of their lives.

Others again seem more to attach themselves to what have been well termed the ‘pomp and vanities of this world.’ Magnificent houses, grand equipages, numerous retinues, splendid entertainments, high and fashionable connections, appear to constitute, in their estimation, the supreme happiness of life.²⁵²

²⁵⁰ Referring to the book and video by the same name, *how overconsumption is killing us and how to fight back*.

²⁵¹ Edmond Mbiaka.

²⁵² William Wilberforce, *A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious Systems*.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“...**And means to an end**,” as a back half without any direct connection, but only what I impulsively attached at the time. Still, *making ends meet* and methodically applying some *means to an end*, seems somewhat connected or at least sensible, one’s survival at stake, adding more to it, *necessity as the mother of invention*.

And *mark my words*, that such hardship or *hard times* are coming to us; that though we have been enriched, epitomized as the wealthiest with consumption and its materialism, *the ride* is drawing to *the end* (the tune, “This is the End”, of *The Doors* in mind), the burden of debt both public and private, reaching critical mass.

If history shows anything, it is that there's no better way to justify relations founded on violence, to make such relations seem moral, than by reframing them in the language of debt—above all, because it immediately makes it seem that it's the victim who's doing something wrong.²⁵³

And the debt burden alone, producing both the wealthiest and the most indebted society, will finally give way to the pressures leading de facto slavery, the immutable consequences of untenable debt.

Students who acquire large debts putting themselves through school are unlikely to think about changing society. When you trap people in a system of debt. they can’t afford the time to think.

Tuition fee increases are a “disciplinary technique,” and, by the time students graduate, they are not only loaded with debt, but have also internalized the “disciplinarian culture.” This makes them efficient components of the consumer economy.²⁵⁴

“Efficient components” of (not against) *the system* yet enslaved.

²⁵³ David Graeber, *Debt: The First 5,000 Years*.

²⁵⁴ Noam Chomsky.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Up to no good...,” is an idiom with many opportunities, the use practically unlimited in the presence of absolute corruption, *the end* of absolute power, and we watch and wait in the final throes of freedom. ²⁵⁵

A culture that does not grasp the vital interplay between morality and power, which mistakes management techniques for wisdom, and fails to understand that the measure of a civilization is its compassion, not its speed or ability to consume, condemns itself to death.²⁵⁶

As having been addressed previously, here and for the balance of this book, give or take a few deviations.

You cannot *simply stop (on) a moving train* and, as the metaphor makes it out, the combination of all things necessary for reform or resolution are at an end, *the point of no return* behind us and the *derailing* dramatic, a sure destiny—as perhaps predetermined by international forces pressing the world into a single, centralized governance.

Culture and the freedoms of people are fragile. Without a sufficient base, when such pressures come only time is needed—and often not a great deal of time—before there is a collapse. ²⁵⁷

And no political party and its platform matters as that which is happening and will..., as we are *too far down the track—not bound for glory* but the grim result of corruption at every stop.

²⁵⁵ This is referring to several possibilities of financial-economic, social-cultural, and public-private that in combination are transformational, ending any semblance of a Republic, a dysfunctional democracy and statism that is seemingly, systematically destroying the sovereign.

²⁵⁶ Chris Hedges, *Empire of Illusion: The End of Literacy and the Triumph of Spectacle*.

²⁵⁷ Francis Schaeffer. *How Should We Then Live? The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture*.

“...Or good for nothing,” as the formed back half of the last idiom, *up to no good*.

Of the modern theologians that I’m familiar with, one of the most admired is Francis Schaeffer, who addressed not only the faith of Christianity but as well the fate of the state, showcasing the Roman Empire as an example juxtaposed with Western culture as it is and is going, that like Rome, *The West* rose to predominance and then began its decline in the *cycles of nations*—far along in its descent into history whether as *a bang or whimper*—or both—as times goes.

Relativism is considered much in his account of causes, the loss of *absolutes*, and while I will not consider or comment on this further right now, the end of *the end* comes down to states that lose a moral base or *absolutes*, transforming a self-governance or social strength to an authoritarian form that seizes power by *hook or crook*. To this, he adds:

No totalitarian authority nor authoritarian state can tolerate those who have an absolute by which to judge that state and its actions.²⁵⁸

And considering that the state’s interests is *the state*, what is certain is that more state power means less individual liberty, any individual or communal interests superseded, stamped-out, or stomped-down.

In passing, we should note this curious mark of our own age: the only absolute allowed is the absolute insistence that there is no absolute.

And in the dissolution of absolute(s), what is left is the arbitrary whereby so-called rights or privilege is unreasonably applied and allowed, one group against another, but oppression as more prevalent made so by absolute corruption, authority.

²⁵⁸ Francis Schaeffer.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Too close to call...,” can apply to most any competing forces, competition, from games and sports to more serious matters of life, the conclusion or outcome uncertain to the last moment if then.

Thinking of it, *to close to call*, I am reminded of the cases where persons endure *near-death* encounters/experiences, their lives held in the balance while the clock ticks and time determines what is to come, the uncertainty seemingly behind, a sigh or sorrow to follow.

Death is not *the end* to those who hold that eternal life waits for them; that this *earthly life* while finite does not compare with that prepared for them, this place described as paradise. Still, death is not a matter to be taken lightly—and especially if it is your life—aside a favorite, relevant remark by Woody Allen, “I’m not afraid of death; I just don’t want to be there when it happens.”

But aside the humor or comedy of death are those that grieve or mourn with some possibility to be comforted as a miracle of sort. And while it noted that animals may grieve to death, such as the domesticated dog, the possibility remains for persons to be comforted,²⁵⁹ to find respite in even some realization that the dead may never be known again, their bodies consumed, their souls at rest or their spirits joined to that beneath or above.²⁶⁰

What is clear, all *too close* to the heart of one faithful, is that death came by a man but also was overcome by one,²⁶¹ offering help to all but hope only those found faithful to *the call*.

²⁵⁹ With reference to Matthew 5:4.

²⁶⁰ Abstract as this may appear, the immediate state of the soul and spirit are not certain, though the final one is according to scripture; one parable suggesting that the wicked go immediately *beneath* while other evidence without certainty.

²⁶¹ From 1 Corinthians 15:21.

“**...Or was it a close call,**” for those that, *as touched on* in the last page, are no longer with us; that though we knew them or knew of them, any assurance of faith to *the call* is clouded by doubt whether for them as memories or for us as the supposed living.

On this *Good Friday*, as I think about and write of death, the accounts of Christ that lead-up to the resurrection are augmented by another film, *Risen* ²⁶². And in the conclusion of this film, the Roman Tribune—who has gone rouge after witnessing the resurrected messiah—sits aside Christ on a big rock, just the two of them, while the disciples are apparently asleep. In the depth of their conversation, Christ asks Clavius (The Tribune), “What is it you seek,” and in the exchange that follows, the Tribune realizes the miraculous insight of Christ, who not only knows Clavius but can recite verbatim what Clavius had shared with Pilate in confidence, possibly weeks prior regarding his desires, ambitions.

In an intense search for the truth ²⁶³ in the mystery of the Messiah, the claims of some and the disputes of others, is that is that Christ is indeed the Messiah, and into the desert Clavius goes, leaving behind Rome and pressing on to *the call*, closer to those desires and ambitions than perhaps he can discern as *a close call*.

²⁶² *Risen* is a 2016 American biblical drama film, an elaboration on the life of Christ from the perspective of a Roman Tribune, Clavius, assigned to oversee the crucifixion followed with post events from of the resurrection on the charge of Pilate and on behalf of the Jewish Sadducees aimed to quell prophesy and *the followers'* movements and ministry.

²⁶³ While much conspiracy surrounds the crucifixion-resurrection, some clarity is represented in Clavius as a central and crucial character, who retains a reasonable demeanor, able to find and then follow the messiah, beneath the cross, beside the Christ as one found faithful.

Pondering on points of POWER

“When hell freezes over,” as to, (it) isn’t going happen—dismissing even the demands on the destiny of “hell” or *Dante’s Inferno*,²⁶⁴ a burning fueled by the bodies of the those that, *to close to call*, are found wanting, unfaithful in or toward Christ, the Savior.

Among the many dropped into *the lake of fire*, the *Inferno*, or by any other description of *darkness*, are those who do not admit or acknowledge sin, their sin, and thus, they are without any need for a savior of any kind. And whatever the cause(s) of this denial or disbelief, they are stuck in some self-exaltation, some self-assessed exemption, beyond the assertions that *all have sinned and come short-*, and thus are desperately in need....

Not among those *dropped into darkness* are children, those not yet accountable and thus not yet condemned. But *let the children come unto me*, so recorded or translated Christ.²⁶⁵ Not, only to be a child but like a child; powerless but blameless of/to the *trappings* that pull persons away from *The Creator*, deceived in/by the belief that their own power can propel them to new heights—and lows—such as, those who attempt to mock *the message* of *The Messiah* until *hell freezes over*.

²⁶⁴ From Wikipedia, *Dante’s Inferno*, is the first part of Dante Alighieri’s 14th-century epic poem *Divine Comedy*, but subsequently, a series of films from 1924 to 2007; and it describes Dante’s journey through Hell depicted as nine concentric circles of torment located within the Earth, the realm of those who have rejected spiritual values by yielding to bestial appetites or violence, or by perverting their human intellect to fraud or malice against their fellowmen.

²⁶⁵ Christ was clear in regard to children, their innocence and exemption, on several occasions recorded in the gospels; and from Matthew, chapter 19: *Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.*

“**Heaven sent,**” to mean something good, something blessed, or truly sent from God however it happens, the application, an accolade, not always pure or perfect but more simply to voice some pleasure, gratitude, or grace, acknowledges and accepted as such.

Returning to a favorite film, *Luther*, as an adaptation, an application of *heaven sent*, is a German or Saxony priest described as a “spiritual giant” by a cardinal—the same who condemns Luther for his criticism of, and writing against, the practices of the Roman Catholic church, “The practices of the popes past and present.”. From Visual Parables,

The young monk earlier had been disillusioned by the pomp and commercialization of the faith he discovered when he was sent to Rome on monastery business. Like so many scholars of the day, he came to recognize the need for moral reform, but soon he sees the need for doctrinal reform as well. ²⁶⁶

And as though *throwing down the gauntlet*,

Luther posts his famous, or infamous from his enemies’ standpoint; Ninety-Five Theses on the church door, and unwittingly begins the process we now call the Protestant Reformation.

Later to confess some regrets especially regarding the Peasants’ Revolt, Luther’s public condemnation despite his earlier sympathy in their plight. Whether Luther and/or The Reformation ²⁶⁷ was *Heaven sent* is without a concise answer, but it did serve to redress corruption (though as recorded, at great human cost)?

²⁶⁶ <https://readthespirit.com/visual-parables/luther-2003/>.

²⁶⁷ From Wikipedia, The **Reformation** was a major movement within Western Christianity in 16th-century Europe that posed a religious and political challenge to the Catholic Church..., arising from what were perceived to be errors, abuses, and discrepancies by the Catholic Church.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Fall from grace,” seems to be somewhat opposite *heaven sent*; that one is not a blessing, hence *the fall*, but is lost, possibly shunned, reproached, rebuked, as reprobate.

Returning the *Luther*, the film, for a follow-on question: Did Luther, who defiled the Catholic church, *fall from grace*?

As one possible answer, consider that a *fall from grace* demands an additional question: who and what grace(s)? When and as accused of heresy, Luther is ordered to recant, but after delay and much prayer, replied:

Unless I am convinced by Scripture and by plain reason and not by Popes and councils who have so often contradicted themselves, my conscience is captive to the word of God. To go against conscience is neither right nor safe. I cannot and I will not recant.

And though the church remained resolute, Luther and the council of Germany ultimately incorporated his reforms to include the translation of the Scriptures into their language. As to grace, the “special grace” of God, Luther wrote:

...we may understand that God, of His special grace, makes the teachers of the gospel subject to the Cross, and to all kinds of affliction, for the salvation of themselves and of the people...²⁶⁸

Thus, it is God’s *special grace* that fell on (and not away from) Luther and like, blazing a path for Christianity that was in fact stained with the blood of many swept up in the fury—and not faith—of their afflictions as a pattern that is not finished. That reformation resulted is perhaps the end of or to the *winnowing of the wheat from chaff*, the separation of *the goats* from *the sheep*, belief from unbelief.

²⁶⁸ Martin Luther, Commentary on Galatians.

“Under the radar,” obviously originates from the advent of the radar; the detection of metal objects (planes, ships, etc.) by transmitting/receiving electromagnetic waves. To be *under the radar* is to go undetected; that is, stealth or silent, unwatched, unobserved, unmonitored, and seemingly clear and free from effects.

I just want to fly under the radar, because when you start to make yourself into a big deal, that's when you get shot down.²⁶⁹

But who wants to be detected and all that, given the connotations that detected and then surveilled, one is subject to, at the worst, being shot down, immobilized, figuratively or otherwise arrested? Who wants to get blown out of the sky, a puff of smoke or fireball?

But then technocracy with its expanding surveillance that enables practically no privacy, everything *under the radar*.

Governments should not have this capacity. But governments will use whatever technology is available to them to combat their primary enemy—which is their own population.²⁷⁰

And the depths and degrees of this surveillance is both *the means and the end* to best ensure the population poses no threat—at least to the establishment—and that “progress” can continue toward the concentration of wealth and centralization of political and economic power, coupled with the commerce of corporations, proportionally reducing individual privacy, liberty and any else thought our right(s). And where this is going is a question long predicted and planned, and now executed, tyrannical and totalitarian, the technocracy emerging as the autocracy of these modern times.²⁷¹

²⁶⁹ John Green, *An Abundance of Katherines*.

²⁷⁰ Noam Chomsky, “NSA surveillance is an attack on American citizens”, *The Guardian*.

²⁷¹ **Technocracy**; control of society by an elite of technical experts

Pondering on points of POWER

“**A dead fish...**” is an idiom with possibility, but what seems evident is that it is dead in all ways no matter the cause. Whereas slowly warming water will slowly kill fish, intense noises, blasts or even electricity are a *quick and dirty* methods for a *dead fish* and more. And where I am going with this, *a dead fish*, is the “method” applied to killing (fish) naturally or by one or more unnatural means: *warming*, algae growth (oxygen depletion) or chemical agents; or the quick as with an explosive or electrical shock that stuns if not stills life, alive one moment and dead the next.

Generally, fish are killed to eat—as we all know—but sometimes they’re killed for sport or as side-effect of some industrial spillway, or maybe due to overpopulation in the imbalance{s} of ecosystems. But fish are not people of course, and while fish die prematurely for many reasons, most of which are described above, the fact is that fish are long seen as subordinate to humans, their meat consumed, their images posted as *the catch of the day*, and their bodies modeled, hung on walls of houses, restaurants, sports shops, and other places.

When the angler makes a fine catch, he is pleased, a good day or trip, and when the commercial fisherman has a full net, so too.... But when institutions purposely destroy persons prematurely, made legal and authorized, then humanity is at risk, the world is under siege, and history is once again crafted to protect the guilty and punish the innocent, the immoral made manifest, the unthinkable made utterly necessary, and *the cold darkness of the depths* made as calm, clear warm waters. But then, “A fish only begins to realize its potential the moment you throw it in deep waters,”²⁷² and after that first dip or dive begins the struggle to survive amid predators known and unknown.

²⁷² Matshona Dhliwayo.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“...Or a red herring ²⁷³,” referring to the expression, a representation of something misleading or distracting...lending and leading to mayhem, misdirection, mystery, and muddling.

“Yes sir, the fish was left in place of the crystal ball. It's been bagged and tagged for analysis.”

“Great. Now we have another red herring on our hands.” ²⁷⁴

And in this *new find*, a fish of some kind, is the possibility of a *red herring*; a plant(-ed), an obfuscation, planned and intended to mislead or upend..., *tripping up* or sending the process *down a rabbit trail*, an important question or consideration skirted or bypassed in *the making* of mystery, the muddling of matters, the misdirection and missed finding of motives, mayhem and who done it.

In the film, *The Mist* ²⁷⁵, the *red herring* is that the monsters are defeated or destroyed while a primary character attempts a homicide-suicide of several in shock from a previous attack and now more or less dead given the apparent odds of survival.

Another creation of suspense, the sequel of *Sherlock*, ²⁷⁶ host *schools of red herrings* as to the suspects, accomplices, witnesses, and the man himself, the combination and conjunction to keep the viewer befuddled, dumbfounded or clueless as to *who done it*.

²⁷³ From Wikipedia, the term **red herring** was popularized in 1807 by English polemicist William Cobbett, who told a story of having used a strong-smelling smoked fish to divert and distract hounds from chasing a rabbit. Unlike the **straw man**, which involves a distortion of the other party's position, the **red herring** is a seemingly plausible, though ultimately irrelevant, diversionary tactic.

²⁷⁴ A.F. Stewart, *Fairy Tale Fusion*.

²⁷⁵ *The Mist* is based on a Stephen King novel by the same name

²⁷⁶ From Wikipedia, **Sherlock** is a series set in the present, praised for the quality of its writing, acting, and directing.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Pot calling the kettle black,**” is at least borderline hypocrisy, noted as far back as the 1600’s in the Spanish novel, *Don Quixote*, with similar themes across the Persian, Greek and the Aramaic languages, stories, and histories. ²⁷⁷

There are a lot of *pots* in *high places*; the kind that the give that gives “justice” a bad name simply because of the posturing, those posing as upright and honorable while pointing the accusatory finger at another of *their kind*—and especially the less powerful or well-connected. Yes, *high places*,

And what sort of lives do these people, who pose as being moral, lead themselves? My dear fellow, you forget that we are in the native land of the hypocrite. ²⁷⁸

Of *high-places*, even *high-brows*, that are *hell-bent* on holding the truth at bay, wielding their way(s) *behind the curtain* of secrecy or from a *throne* of power, casting judgments, signing orders and dictates, and seemingly sealing the fate of those that oppose.... Yet,

Nothing that we despise in other men is inherently absent from ourselves. We must learn to regard people less in the light of what they do or don’t do, and more in light of what they suffer.²⁷⁹

And to *learn* is to consider that *nothing is hidden from God’s sight, but everything is laid bare before him to whom we must give account.*

²⁷⁷ From Wikipedia, this idiom as being used by a person who is guilty of the very thing of which they accuse another and is thus an example of **psychological projection**, in which the ego defends itself against unconscious impulses or qualities (both positive and negative) by denying their existence in themselves and attributing them to others, otherwise labeled as **blame shifting**, manifesting into **shame dumping**.

²⁷⁸ Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

²⁷⁹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“...Of course,” as not an idiom but still, as impulse and inspiration to offer, something to expand on, more hullabaloo on hypocrisy—omitting myself *of course*—in such times that,

The truth has become an insult.²⁸⁰

Lies beget (or spawn) more *lies* from *the kind* that not only point the accusatory finger but raise the hand of a legacy of liars, with endless degrees of deception, such that

Neither man nor angel can discern hypocrisy, the only evil that walks invisible except to God alone.²⁸¹

To say again that *nothing is hidden from God's sight, but everything is laid bare before him to whom we must give account*. And whether repeated or recited, truth does prevail, whether by time or in time, of which will each and all will know from time or for time, within as well as beyond ourselves, our hearts deceptive above all things.

But while we wait, or for the time or times being, amid desperation and even despair, much depends on discernment; to see things as they really are, the realistic and not the imaginative, what is *behind the curtain* as opposed to a stage of the self-engrossed and the grossly deceived, seeking the truth which tells us and guides us each as,

He keeps his voice kindly but remote. A cross between a pedagogue, soothsayer, and a benevolent uncle – that should be his tone.²⁸²

That harmonizes with our souls and saves us each from falling prey to us and to them, the temptations of denial, deception, and deceit.

²⁸⁰ Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

²⁸¹ John Milton, *Paradise Lost*.

²⁸² Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Black hole...**,” is usually associated with space,²⁸³ but *down to earth* comes at least one worldly application, the meaning somewhat the same where matter(s) never escape, trapped in perpetuity, otherwise gone forever!

Sometimes I wonder if my heart is like a black hole--it's so dense that there's no room for light, but that doesn't mean it can't still suck me in.²⁸⁴

To say that *dark heart* is seared of any conscience, subject to malevolence, maliciousness, and able to “suck me in”, to commit acts of unadulterated cruelty, corruption without a sense of the cause or effect, no confession or consciousness of wrongdoing, my sin(s).

The Scriptures speak or prophesy of a time when *the love of many will grow cold*²⁸⁵, to suggest that hearts will grow *darker*, the “black hole” at its best to do its worst, at its largest to the most possible, the unimaginable, the inconceivable.

How will (or does) love prevail against it, these powers of a *black hole, the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms* in combination with rulers and authorities in the *dark world*?²⁸⁶ For what is foretold as well manifest in the lives of martyrs and missionaries is that one who loves and does good can be finally and fearfully brought beyond *the struggle* to their physical death by or through *this dark world* with all its *darkened hearts and evil forces*.

²⁸³ From Wikipedia, a **black hole** is region of spacetime where gravity is so strong that nothing—no particles or even electromagnetic radiation such as light—can escape from it.

²⁸⁴ Jasmine Warga, *My Heart and Other Black Holes*.

²⁸⁵ Matthew 24: 12.

²⁸⁶ From Ephesians 6:12: For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“...Or do you see the light,” as perhaps often aligned with salvation, the crossing over from *darkness* to the truth; those persons are *born into corruption* and are only freed by the gift of God, Christ the Messiah, the *coming one*.

Again, the Scriptures speak of this light much, an entering into it, a surrounding of it, and a departing from it, for those who do not repent, confess, humbly and faithfully following Christ.

There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end, it leads to death, so says the Proverb, the works of Solomon.²⁸⁷ That this “right” is not the right way, gives pause to wonder about the reasons that God sent his son in the first place; those persons, left to themselves, are apt to be pulled into the *black hole*, not necessarily realizing it until it is too late, their heart black, *no room for light*, as

You answer to none but the whim of your own black heart.²⁸⁸

And perhaps reach a point of no return, no place for repentance of wrongdoings or sin(s), with no desire to see the difference between the way chosen and the way created by God intended for creation.

Yet God’s mercy..., and for those that do repent, their hearts not hardened, darkened, or drawn irreversibly into the *black hole*, there is hope in and for Christ’s return whereby *every knee should bow in heaven, on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father*.²⁸⁹ Ideally, as like the character Job, delight is the sense of *this great and terrible day*, knowing that the redeemer lives with one’s own eyes.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁷ Proverbs 14: 12.

²⁸⁸ Joshua Winning, *Sentinel*.

²⁸⁹ From Philippians 2: 9-11.

²⁹⁰ From Job 19.

Pondering on points of POWER

" **Eat crow...**," or to be disgraced or dishonored by having to admit one's failures or mistakes, the *agony of defeat*. But then, there is something to gain from it; a win out of loss, a lessen perhaps learned from a failure, a homily from the humiliation, and so on. We each learn more from failure than success, not the least of which is how to accept failure gracefully, with gratitude, besides the realization that *winning is not everything* and that pride is not always a virtue, even valuable.

But then, losing is for losers, right? And any who simply *rollover* or *take-it*, cannot possibly be winners. But then,

You must take the word "loser" and add it to your resume and walk around with it on your name tag as it *hand-feeds* you your own shit in dosages too large for even great beasts to swallow.²⁹¹

And more than *crow*, the loser must eat his own shit—a lot of shit—that stinks, is putrid as excrement is bad enough, the odor. And to stomach it, how does one get over it, through it, beyond it, the loss, is not so much the matter—not really—as embracing it, thinking about it, and trying to use it in a positive, productive, and promising way.

If/as one loses in love, then love more—not less—and learn that love is precious enough unto itself for the lover, never mind the doubt, denial and even death that lends to losing it, because,

Love always issues out of the places that hurt the most.²⁹²

Not with words, a glib "I love you", but more by action, prayer and giving of self, never mind the losses before, *crow* or *the shit* that we make and take of losing and ideally learning to, again, love.

²⁹¹ Pat Conroy, *My Losing Season: A Memoir*, 2002.

²⁹² *My Losing Season: A Memoir*, Adapted

“...**On a silver platter**,” as to mean a valuable gift, the receipt of an unearned reward, or something made easy, without much effort. Contrast *a silver platter* with *a silver lining*, the latter to suggest a sign of hope or something positive in a bad situation, much as described in the previous page, the potential gains from loss.

A *silver platter* is much like one *born with a silver spoon in their mouth*; that they are privileged or have privilege, some benefits that are unearned and arguably undeserved, punctuated by the pomp and pretention characteristic of such, a life less likely to lose...well.

In her first book, *Heartland* ²⁹³, Sarah Smarsh offers experiences of growing up as *poor white trash*; born to a teen mother of generations of poor farmers in Kansas, she writes,

Society’s contempt for the poor becomes the poor person’s contempt for herself.

Lending to another of *the begetting*; that love for one becomes the loved one’s love for themselves with all the possibilities in between; the love we each pursue is what we think we deserve, our expectation based on our experience(s). And she continues..., the poor one as an object “to be made invisible as a class is an invalidation,” all the less.

Who wants to give attention to the powerless, the homeless, the destitute and *down-and-out*? For in/with such of those deemed valueless, considered with contempt, there is no *silver lining* of hope, *silver spoons* and *silver platters* save that of love as it is, perhaps never more desired and determined however distant the prospect or possibility, however precious and pursued the purpose.

²⁹³ *Heartland, Working Hard and being Broke in the Richest Country on Earth: A Memoir*, 2018.

“**Crying in the wilderness...**,” as bewildered or bemoaned, might seem pointless, the tears in obscurity, valueless and invalid as the poor, *white trash* as written by Sarah Smarsh ²⁹⁴. But this phrase is from the scriptures, referring to John the Baptist, a relative of Jesus selected to prepare the way for Christ’s ministry. ²⁹⁵ And what it must have been like to be him, John, the one that Christ called “...one greater...”? ²⁹⁶

And though greater, obedient in his calling, John dies a martyr, executed by Herod Antipas because he apparently is a *threat to the state*. ²⁹⁷ But also, and perhaps more pointed, is that Herod acts on behalf of Herodias who seemingly despises John for his criticism of their illicit relationship and more, her daughter who pleased Herod, lustful for such youth, with her dance during his drunkenness. But crying *in the wilderness* does not stop because the corruption does not end with the justice system that does not judge with fairness or justice. ²⁹⁸

²⁹⁴ **Sarah Smarsh** is an American journalist and nonfiction writer. Published in 2018, *Heartland* is an autobiographical work which focuses on the lives of her family members, white blue-collar residents of the Midwestern and Southern USA.

²⁹⁵ From Isaiah 40:3, then referenced in John 1:23, the arrival of Christ was prophesized and then manifested with John the Baptist, to “prepare the way...and make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”

²⁹⁶ From Matthew 11:11; “Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist.”

²⁹⁷ From Wikipedia, Herod, who was tetrarch, or sub-king, of Galilee under the Roman Empire, had imprisoned John the Baptist because he reproved Herod for divorcing his wife and unlawfully taking Herodias, the wife of his brother Herod Philip I. On Herod’s birthday, Herodias’ daughter.

²⁹⁸ Influenced by Proverbs 29:14: If a king judges the poor with fairness, his throne will be established forever.

"...And a crying shame," that depends on both *true* tears (versus lying eyes, and the possibility of shame ²⁹⁹ (to happen or occur), the consequence(s) given credence to one's emotions, reaction.

"I felt ashamed."

"But of what? Psyche, they hadn't stripped you naked or anything?"

"No, no, Maia. Ashamed of looking like a mortal—of being a mortal."

"But how could you help that?"

"Don't you think the things people are most ashamed of are things they can't help?" ³⁰⁰

And again, from *Heartland*, the author writes of her shame, the invalidation and contempt for or because of something she could not help, could not change (at the time) and was otherwise powerless to overcome given all things people are most ashamed about.

In the U.S., the shaming of the poor is a unique form of bigotry in that it's not necessarily about who or what you are—your skin color.... Rather, it's about what your actions have failed to accomplish—financial success within capitalism—and the related implications... in a supposed meritocracy.³⁰¹

And it's *a crying shame*, not to be poor, but to believe that being poor is entirely due to the will and want of each one, their own fault and hence, their self-developed plight.

²⁹⁹ From Wikipedia, **shame** is an unpleasant self-conscious emotion typically associated with a negative evaluation of the self...feelings of distress, exposure, mistrust, powerlessness, and worthlessness, whereas **guilt** is an emotional experience that occurs when a person believes or realizes—accurately or not—that they have compromised their own standards of conduct or have violated universal moral standards and bear significant responsibility for that violation.

³⁰⁰ C.S. Lewis, *Till We Have Faces*.

³⁰¹ Sarah Smarsh, *Heartland*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Lame duck...**,” is often applied to a late term politician, notably the president, as more or less *riding it out, going through the motions*, or simply *counting the days*, their impending departure and farewell. But then, that depends on whether they did anything of public service to the present, their presumed decisions often *influenced* by noted and nefarious powers, agendas evident or not.

In his book, *The Party is Over*, author Mike Lofgren writes,

The U.S. is now a bloated military empire on the cusp of steady and irrevocable economic decline. Historically, the danger in such cases is that when the fiscal stability of the empire begins to weaken, the governing elites double-down on the very policies of military profligacy that caused the fiscal crisis in the first place.³⁰²

And already referencing Jimmy Carter’s statement, that we are no longer a functioning democracy, what is left for the U.S., our future? Considering again the cycles of nations, is it accurate to agree with Mike and others that the U.S. is in its twilight?

The U.S. forgot— if it ever knew— the supreme virtue of an enlightened realpolitik, which is to keep one’s powder dry, intervene militarily as a last resort (rather than a first), and maintain industrial and fiscal strength at home.

Add to this military prowess the emerging powers of world order and international governance and what you have is not just a *lame duck* but one in a pond, *ducks in a row*, too foolish to fly and too wayward to wonder why *we the people* are apathetic, far apart and forgotten.³⁰³

³⁰² Mike Lofgren, *The Party Is Over: How Republicans Went Crazy, Democrats Became Useless, and the Middle Class Got Shafted*.

³⁰³ Not only continuous war and maleficence, but a growing imbalance among institutional powers (the family, church, and state), lending and leading to increased tyranny, totalitarianism.

“...Or just sitting...,” which is to say, getting comfortable or more, pursuing pleasure, *dancing to the fiddle* ³⁰⁴, while Mike Lofgren’s *deep state* makes up riddles ³⁰⁵, an agenda secret and subversive, divisive and destructive, deadly for more than we know—and care to know.

But the larger objective, beyond specific policies, is to blanket the American public with a message of fear. As long as we are fearful, as long as there is an endless list of threats, Pentagon spending can never be cut, PATRIOT Act provisions can never be repealed, and the U.S. will forever have the right and duty to meddle in every corner of the world. ³⁰⁶

But who will care if everyone is *just sitting*—not *standing in the gap, on the watchtower* or otherwise, acting on behalf of us?

As it is, or was at the time of Mike’s writing, much of the country is stuck, their minds made-up or otherwise locked as,

Probably about 20 to 25 percent of the adult American population is so right-wing authoritarian, so scared, so self-righteous, so ill-informed, and so dogmatic that nothing you can say or do will change their minds. They would march America into a dictatorship and probably feel that things had improved as a result....

But of course, it (as conditions of compliance) is not limited to one supposed party or any collective, but again stems from imbalances among institutional powers; that as *the state* followed by corporations increase in power, with more force as evidence, we each have lost cause for celebration, our destiny decided.

³⁰⁴ An inference to Nero fiddling while Rome burned.

³⁰⁵ Merely for the rhyming, “riddles” as to require ingenuity or insight to understand, comprehend.

³⁰⁶ Mike Lofgren, *The Party is Over*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Time will tell,” is an ideal follow-on from the last page: a premonition of sort that the U.S. is not only in decline but is systematically dismantling, its demise planned for purposes that serve a world-order, international governance, both *the state* and multinationals rising at epic proportions of power, force with fear.

As it is or, at the time once again of the book, *The Party is Over*, Mike Lofgren writes:

For whatever reason, people have become apathetic, uninformed, and cynical. They don’t participate because they think there’s not a dime’s worth of difference between the two parties. And what’s going to rush into the vacuum? It’s going to be power, money and influence centers who would benefit from everybody just going to sleep.

But whether we *sleep*, sit, or stand, *time will tell* that the continuing concentration of power and centralization of politics is indeed the course or mission, given the conditions outlaid in the scriptures and culminating specifically with *the Man of Lawlessness*.³⁰⁷

The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore, God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.³⁰⁸

And as bad as things become, as *time will tell*, the peak of such *darkness*, deception, and destruction, is this Man of Lawlessness.

³⁰⁷ **The Man of Lawlessness (or Sin)** is, from 2 Thessalonians 2:1—3:15,

³⁰⁸ “The Second Coming: Not Before the ‘Man of Lawlessness’”, June 21, 2020, Bethlehem 2020 Conference for Pastors, desiring-God.

“On the other hand,” there is the Holy Spirit; the one given as *the helper* on Christ’s ascension, that produces *fruit* and offers *gifts*. It is in and through the Spirit that souls can discern the truth from lies, *the sheep from the wolves, the light from the darkness*—which is not to say that “knowing” or discerning is enough to ward off persecution, punishment, and the possible purge of those who testify to Christ, abide in the Scriptures by faith, or oppose the orders and dictates of tyranny, totalitarianism.

How does one know *the truth* but by the truth, *the way* but by the way (given), and *the life* but by life before *the beginning* and beyond *the end*?

If you look for truth, you may find comfort in the end; if you look for comfort you will not get either comfort or truth only soft soap and wishful thinking to begin, and in the end, despair. ³⁰⁹

Desires met or at least sought on the one hand as comfort and convenience and *on the other hand*, the truths made evident in the Scriptures and by the Holy Spirit. Let it be known:

The true soldier fights not because he hates what is in front of him, but because he loves what is behind him. ³¹⁰

And in this modern time, information as never before matched in volume, and velocity, is unprecedented deceit and its destruction; and thus, *the truth* as never more dangerous, the fight fiercer, and the measure of *the true soldier* in courage and casualty. ³¹¹

³⁰⁹ C. S. Lewis.

³¹⁰ G. K. Chesterton.

³¹¹ Inspired by George Orwell, “In a time of deceit telling the truth is a revolutionary act.”

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Silence is golden**,” to recall a song of year’s ago by the same title, with the refrain,

Silence is golden
But my eyes still see
Silence is golden, golden
But my eyes still see ³¹²

And though no words or, as suggested in the last page, too many words, inodiated with information, how does one *still see*?

Lies are not just what is said or done but is also what is not said, or in the realm of censorship, what is censored, altered, quashed, or crushed by the powers that be. In the formalities of *silence* is the end of the First Amendment. ³¹³ and increasingly, intensely, individuals that speak-out against issues of the day—that oppose the state’s positions or policies—and are *de-platformed*, denied access to the internet, punished as *extremists*, “domestic terrorists” via the whims of authorities, arbitrary law ³¹⁴.

Though it has been obvious to discerning observers for a considerable period that the United States is moving at an accelerating pace from constitutionalism toward arbitrary power, the vast majority of Americans have been slow to recognize that a crisis of governance exists. ³¹⁵

³¹² The Tremeloes, “Silence is Golden”, 1964.

³¹³ **First Amendment:** Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition....

³¹⁴ **Arbitrary law** is based on individual discretion rather than a fair application of the law.

³¹⁵ Bruce P. Frohnen, “Lawless America: What Happened to the Rule of Law,” Ohio Northern University Pettit College of Law,

problems, pains, and pleasures

“At the end of the day,” or what is foremost or key after everything is considered in a matter, topic, or point.

At the end of the day, the most overwhelming key to a child’s success is the positive involvement of parents. ³¹⁶

And I agree; those parents are, or parenting is, predominate in the development of a child, their children.

With the risks and issues of the children ever increasing, the health of the family is faltering and failing as measured by/in single-parent families, foster children, divorce and disparity, and a growing disinterest in or intention of marriage among younger generations.

When men and women fail to form stable marriages, the result is a vast expansion of government attempts to cope with the terrible social needs that result. There is scarcely a dollar that the state and federal government spends on social programs that is not driven, in large part, by family fragmentation: crime, poverty, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, school failure, mental and physical health problems. ³¹⁷

And the institution of marriage fracturing as measured by/in:

Separate federal data shows that the median age at first marriage is about 30 for men and 28 for women, and that between 1978 and 2018, the share of adults between 18 and 34 who were married plummeted from 59% to 29%; a record share of younger people [not] expected to marry at all, the CDC report notes. ³¹⁸

³¹⁶ Jane D. Hull.

³¹⁷ Maggie Gallagher.

³¹⁸ “U.S. Marriage Rate Hits Historic Low”, U.S News, Gaby Galvin, April 29, 2020.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Weak in (or at) the knees...,” or in such levels of nervousness, does not begin to explain why marriage is in decline, the strength of society ever falling while the state’s power rises. For as,

All the power [the State] has is what society gives it, plus what it confiscates from time to time on one pretext or another; there is no other source from which State power can be drawn. Therefore, every assumption of State power, whether by gift or seizure, leaves society with so much less power. ³¹⁹

And as it is, or has become, the state continues to rise. From the same source, that “in the proportion you give the state power to do things for you, you give it power to do things to you,” to know or come to realize that the state always acts in its best interests—not individuals or other institutions.

But as soon as one of these institutions, be it the state, the church, the family, or the economy, become so strong as seemingly to threaten the very survival of others, then the issues cease to be petty, capable of compromise, and the arguments become preludes to civil wars and revolutions. ³²⁰

And yet *the rise* is a growing imbalance; one that begins with the state’s interests, initiatives, transitioning to a corporatocracy with no limits as to governance and jurisdiction on a scale as never historically happened—not even among empires!

If we are going to have an international order, then, it will have to rest upon some other base [other than the state] ...or one that is extranational by its very nature. [] The proposed base is the international corporation. ³²¹

³¹⁹ Albert Jay Nock, *Our Enemy, the State*.

³²⁰ *The Balance of Power in Society*, Frank Tannenbaum, 1969.

³²¹ Tannenbaum regarding the corporatocracy,

“...**Or hard-headed**,” as in stubborn or willful, and probably less than *weak kneed*, apprehensive, or cautious. And still from a latter page or two, the connection between these idioms and “other institutions” is one of balance; that, again, as the state or its successor, the corporation, continue to rise in power, other institutions weaken—however stubborn to stay in balance that is so crucial to the sustainment and success of societal life.

But what is trending in an ever growing imbalance points to the opposite; that societal decline is spiraling toward failure, faltering in the morass of an ever widening wealth gap and concentrated power with/of the state and its accomplices, corporations; the two *joined at the hip*—and everywhere else that can or cannot be imagined as its representatives shift from public to private employment, the so-called “conflict of interest” trodden under *special interests* shared and supported by *partners in crime*, fascism to its fullest beyond *the revolving door*.³²²

Political analysts claim that an unhealthy relationship can develop between the private sector and government, based on the granting of reciprocated privileges to the detriment of the nation, and can lead to regulatory capture. ...

The metaphor of a revolving door has been used to describe people switching jobs, from working as lawmakers, to being lobbyists, and vice versa.³²³

Lending to a phrase with dual meaning: *wrong-headed*.

³²² The **revolving door** or back-scratching among and between the private and public sector, both *feeding at the trough* of government largess and a liberation of any *conflict of interest*, working *hand in glove*, quid pro quo, in the seizure and sustainment of power, both financial and geopolitical.

³²³ From Wikipedia, “Revolving door (politics).

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Point blank...**,” is usually tied to a gunshot, but more generally it means as to such close range as to not miss (the target); and obviously, to leave no doubt as to one’s intentions, their aim both figuratively, possibly literally.

For the intended, almost certain, *target* however, the aim is anything but ideal; their life or livelihood about to end under no uncertain terms as is described. No, for the target, it is more, “No offense, but I’d rather kiss the horse.”³²⁴

Consider that *a target* starts *under the radar* of somebody tracking with intentions whether sited from afar or near, from some peripheral or *point blank*; the tracked as not alone, but evidently of such interest or aim, literally, to be surveilled, sited, and possibly subdued, cynically expressed as: “You’re nothing if you’re not special,”³²⁵ and you’re not special unless you’re target.

To return to the script of *Schindler’s List*, the term, “special treatment” is a euphemism for death by execution, those *targeted* for death *point blank*, moved from “essential worker” to something less than non-essential, such terms pointless against harsh truths.

I know you have received orders from our commandant, which he has received from his superiors, to dispose of the population of this camp. Now would be the time to do it. Here they are, they’re all here. This is your opportunity., or you could leave, and return to your families as men instead of murderers.³²⁶

And as men or humans, the guards file-out of the building, leaving the list as “an absolute good, life,”³²⁷ morality more than murder, those men made so.

³²⁴ Anthony Horowitz, *Point Blank*.

³²⁵ Horowitz.

³²⁶ Oskar Schindler.

³²⁷ Iskar Stern.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“...Or shooting blanks,” can mean that, whatever the fire or its power be, it is, for better or not, *blanks*—the “real” rounds or bullets perhaps left for another day.

What is *the target* when it comes to *blanks* but nothing of import or purpose—as useless as those deemed *nonessential*, ready for *special treatment at point blank* range or murder by other means.

The U.S. is once again reexamining the laws (or is it rights), pertaining to firearms; all this, is another flurry of “mass shootings”—almost always by an alleged *lone wolf*.³²⁸ And as framed in the larger context of violence, these events intentionally bring many to reconsider the supposed “right to bear arms”.

But with or without any right of or to..., is that a police state cannot allow individual ownership, possession, of such weapons.³²⁹ And though we don’t in a “police state”, could or will such happen? What I think is that, as described by Paul Craig Roberts, we will.... For in time and through subversion, the state will become (or is becoming) totalitarian.³³⁰

Antidemocracy, executive predominance, and elite rule are basic elements of *inverted totalitarianism*.

And this *inversion*, this police state, is coming ever closer to *your front door* and then, within you.

³²⁸ So-called “mass shootings” are seldom blamed on or attributed to an organized group or movement, but much more often reduced to or reported as a single, “lone wolf” event albeit with a personal, sorted history.

³²⁹ Attributed to Paul Craig Roberts, from assorted video interviews.

³³⁰ From Wikipedia, Sheldon Wolin coined the term **inverted totalitarianism** in 2003 to describe what he saw as the emerging form of government of the U.S.; the state increasingly turning into a managed democracy..., its differences from proper totalitarianism, such as Nazi and Stalinist regimes.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Take stock**,” as assessing a situation, a prelude to a decision perhaps or to *take stock* of life following a near-death experience.

In taking stock of ourselves, we should not forget that fear plays a large part in the drama of failure—the first thing to be dropped. Fear is a mental deficiency...if taken in hand before it gains an ascendancy over us. ³³¹

And in/on the “drama of failure”, and “fear” in particular, that one can be forced into isolation whether emotional or physical, drawing down/out any sense of self-value or relevance, *fear running* so far as to ruin, the soul sold-off, oneself empty of any esteem. And from a recent video on the matter is “mass psychosis” ³³² plaguing society. in part because,

The masses have never thirsted after truth. They turn aside from evidence that is not to their taste, preferring to deify error, if error seduce them. Whoever can supply them with illusions is easily their master; and whoever attempts to destroy their illusions is always their victim. ³³³

Which is to say that immunity, with or without a vaccine, is possible when it comes to the illness of illusions, where “madness is the norm and delusions take many forms”. Historically, (according to the narrator of the video), these delusional forms yielded *witch hunts*, lynching and other such acts of hysteria but, “in the modern era, it is the mass psychosis of totalitarianism that is the greatest threat,” as something for me to assess, to *take stock* in what society is or was, and will be as determined by the changes in and effects of society and my relationships, both myself and the other(s). What is to become of us against growing totalitarianism?

³³¹ Douglas Fairbanks.

³³² “The Manufacturing of Mass Psychosis”, Academy of Ideas.

³³³ Gustave le Bon.

“Blowing smoke,” as to saying nothing of value or importance, merely *mouth-ing-off* or of no matter, significance. But as we enter an age of increasing totalitarianism, I turn again to video cited in the last page, it’s prescience to these times.

Totalitarianism is the modern phenomenon of the total centralized state power coupled with the obliteration of individual human rights: in the totalized state, there are those in power, and there are the objective masses, the victims. ³³⁴

And the rulers, deified, while the rules subordinated to *the fringes*, a land of fiefdoms, the masses transformed into a “child-like” status, perhaps psychologically delayed, dismissive of the brutality before them. They are, or it is, according to Hannah Arendt,

The ideal subject of totalitarian rule is...people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction (i.e., the reality of experience) and the distinction between true and false (i.e., the standards of thought) no longer exist.

And it is dismissive of facts or the truth, “turning sound minds into sick minds,” the *transformation* built on delusions with mass suffering and social ruin. And where does it begin, this *transformation*, but with the ruling class who, “prone to delusions that augment their power, they can and will, even must, dominate and control a society”. But first and foremost, the ruler(s) must convince society of their rule, which is where the mass psychosis comes into play, the leveraging of fear of yet another crisis, a real or existential threat, insecurity and uncertainty run amuck.

It is a simple question of reorganizing and manipulating collective feelings in the proper way. ³³⁵

³³⁴ Arthur Versluis.

³³⁵ Joost Meerloo.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Necessary evil...**,” or also, *the lesser of two evils, add paint to the picture* of totalitarianism. Add a new word, menticide: a systematic and intentional undermining of a person's conscious mind.³³⁶ And apparently, as never before, a *transformation* of unmatched proportions—where facts and truths do not matter and thus lies and more lies multiply in size and strength.

A fantastic thing is happening in our world. Today a man is no longer punished only for the crimes he has in fact committed. Now he may be compelled to confess to crimes that have been conjured up by his judges, who use his confession for political purposes.

Where, as a real threat by historical account, the decline in/of justice portends of a general decline in society in the wake of rising statecraft.

Priming a society for menticide begins with fear, from the cited video once more; the decline in/of justice is the replacement of *due process* with expedience³³⁷ that in principle is less about “getting tough on crime” and more on moving closer to/toward menticide, “wavering of terror” of increasing frequency and intensity, the effect or impact eased by only intermittent calms, followed by yet more... whether touted as “the new norm” or not, but still a *necessary evil* to render control amid systemic and systematic chaos, uncertainty.

³³⁶ **Menticide** occurs when, again Joost Meerloo, delusions, carefully implanted, are difficult to correct. If/as such is overcome, *what counts is the consistency and integrity of one's behavior, the courage in taking a stand, not conforming to official dogma. At the moment faith and hope disappear, man breaks down*

³³⁷ **Expedience**, where *the end* justifies the means, is opposite **due process**, or proving guilt beyond reasonable doubt, the means justifying the end.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“...**And the greater good**,” which is usually applied as a vaunted alibi for something *going down*, not generally good but made to sound like it is/was *what the people want*.

After learning that most *have no thirst for truth* however, the use of “the greater good” does not seem that bad; “the people” not wanting (for) anything *too hard to swallow*, inconvenient or confusing (given that confusion is customary..., cause and effect).

It goes without saying that morality is also the victim of totalitarianism; for when the lines between fact and fiction are no longer even blurred, than what is beyond the absolutes but relativism, arbitrary law, and all the other unprincipled?

“Contradictory reporting, nonsensical information, and blatant lies” is the stock and trade to tease, tantalize and terrorize, reducing one’s coping mechanisms and further, fomenting more fear.

The Big Lie and monotonously repeated nonsense have more emotional appeal in a cold war than logic and reason. While the enemy is still searching for a reasonable counterargument to the first lie, the totalitarians can assault him with another.³³⁸

The purpose is to confuse and convolute, never allowing a chance to *peel back one layer*, another already added to further the cause and effect deeper and wider, submit, comply, conform.

And for those who, by faith and hope, remain uncompromised—or at least unconquered—there is some sort of additional *special treatment*, their destiny in view of their own disregard and disrespect for *the greater good*.³³⁹

³³⁸ Joost A.M. Meerloo.

³³⁹ More from Meerloo: The continual intrusion into our minds of the hammering noises of arguments and propaganda can lead to two kinds of reactions. It may lead to apathy and indifference, the I-don’t-care reaction, or to a more intensified desire to study and to understand.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Shades of grey or gray...,” means that something (it) is not *black or white*, one side or the other, but somewhere in between, perhaps indistinguishable given all the literal shades of gray or grey.

Truth is one such example of *shades of grey*; that some context is established on scale of a “crisis”, prefaced with a combination of facts and pretense—some truth but some untruth too—and in that way some measure of credibility, credence above incredulity.

Problems with *this picture* are replete; for what is not considered is the motive behind the matter, the cause before the effect:

- Why a crisis..., and what critical or credible information is being purposely withheld while other information carefully crafted, aimed to control the crowds?
- Who is behind the matter, and again, their motive(s) given the certainty that the media and the state lie, cheat and steal?
- Where does fear(s) play a part in the whole of it—in conjunction with the media, etc.?

But within these general questions are more questions, all of which ride on the basic need to be well-informed and more: to face such crisis with courage rather than fear, with resolution rather than reservation, and with conviction rather than confusion—as intentionally supplanted by the state and its ilk.

If the king is naked, why pretend differently and, taking it to that of another level, why not call it out—as a sort of *town crier*—except that/for fear of rejection or worse, retaliation and retirement to the grave.

What makes a crisis *a crisis* is not altogether clear for those who comprehend-consider some of that described above, but what is crystal-clear is that sources of unchecked, unaccountable power are corrupt in motive and intention, let along their actions, with a long *train of abuses*, credible evidence that goes beyond conspiracy, as a cabal on a global scale, *shades grey* unlimited.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“...**And smoke & mirrors**,” is the perfect follow-on from *shades of grey*, the images and information designed to confuse and convolute, *adding insult to injury*, implied or expressed as: “You’re too stupid to understand..., and thus must blindly follow our ‘recommendations’,” as the “advice” of given authorities, directly or indirectly elements of the system(s) *behind the matter*.

In a *house of mirrors*, one expects the distortions, deceptions, and delusions, but as to the White House and its community (or cabal), the amusement is largely for them—not us—*smoke & mirror* for those *blowing smoke for the greater good*.

In this labyrinth of leads and lies, one must *take stock* in the least (but most) of understanding: *smoke & mirrors* are ever expanding, growing universally, with the complexity of systems, means and methods, to command and control as historically incomparable. If or as one begins to grasp this system (these systems), and the plan and purpose, there is an ironic sense of relief, the realization of what is...versus the images and information that is *pumped* into the population as propaganda goes and grows.

When one sees or finds *the light*—and holds to it as not just an event but spiritual experience—they are ushered into a new life, lifestyle, that is condemned by those that, *at the end of the day*, view *the light* as threatening, disrupting, dangerous to their cause and the effect in its true light as dark indeed.

We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light.³⁴⁰

But their thinking became futile, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ³⁴¹

³⁴⁰ Plato.

³⁴¹ Romans 1:21.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Line in the sand...,” is to set in place some figurative boundary or limit that once etched or drawn, should not be crossed. As a side note, such a line is always *sand*, not dirt, with strong possibility to the beach, the tide, to wash away as something temporal, brief, and momentary.

When you draw a line in the sand, be careful it is not low tide. ³⁴²

But more is that this *line in the sand* may be challenged wherein the one or other also be challenged one way or another, and the more lines drawn, the more potential challenges along with confusion and frustration, one line after another; thus,

When we draw lines in the sand about certain things vital to our interest(s) and to the interest(s) of democracy and our friends around the world, we have to be willing to back that up. ³⁴³

Presuming that such “interest(s)” is indeed democracy—not draconian or geopolitics aiming to access some sovereign’s natural or other assets as, in effect, a form of conquest and control.

As often the case however, such *lines* are drawn and redrawn much as the treaties between the U.S. government and Indian tribes in the 1800s where all were broken invariably—as seems the practice of power(s) left unchecked, without principle or promise.

I spent 33 years and four months in active military service and during that period I spent most of my time as a high-class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street and the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism. ³⁴⁴

Any line in the sand, here today but gone tomorrow.

³⁴² Dixie Waters.

³⁴³ Fred Thompson.

³⁴⁴ Smedley Butler, *War is a Racket: The Antiwar Classic by America's Most Decorated Soldier*.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“...Against a sea change,” as any potential change or transformation with such potential, the inertia or sheer power far too great for anything to stop it or to even slow it down.

Keying in on *transformation* once again, the *sea-change* that is occurring is deeper and wider than any before it, it's scope and sphere as microscopic as our biological make-up ³⁴⁵ and as large as land, sea, air, and space, ³⁴⁶ even the earth beneath us. ³⁴⁷

This *transformation* is, to take a word from one of my children, “unstoppable”, fueled by *rulers, authorities and powers of the dark world, and of evil and wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly realms*, ³⁴⁸ as well as land, air and sea—on the behalf or bequest of this array of forces, those that consider and conceive themselves to be superior and thus are enabled to eradicate the vast majority of the human race as the execution of a noble-sounding mission, purpose and point to *save the planet* whatever the actual agenda. Of course, there is nothing wrong with *going green* or practicing conservation but as vaguely outlaid above, the mission is not strictly to save but also to end when/where totalitarianism and/or the corporatocracy come to rule, reign, and *reset* the world; first, by carrying on with more intensive and pervasive crisis (or opportunities for more power) coupled with *dark science* and the depopulation or purging via war, disease, and other means, methods.

³⁴⁵ Transgenderism and humanoids are but two examples of the transformation blurring the lines between genders and finally between the organic and synthetic...bio-engineering humanity out of existence.

³⁴⁶ Space exploration includes military expansion as a potential battleground for competing states, defense depts., space programs.

³⁴⁷ The underworld is alleged as the domicile of *fallen angels* that will, as prophecy describes, return in the last battle for possession of the earth.

³⁴⁸ Ephesians 6:12.

Pondering on points of POWER

And “**From pillar to post**,” a *sea change* of epic scope, the ever concentrated and centralized powers will exact their purpose, once again aimed to create *a perfect, pure race, cut out by purge*.

If we cut up beasts simply because they cannot prevent us and because we are backing our own side in the struggle for existence, it is only logical to cut up imbeciles, criminals, enemies, or capitalists for the same reasons.³⁴⁹

Or any others who do not qualify, comply, conform, or concede.

What is more (if you consider *the mission* as more), is that science is (and will be) used as the basis, justifying the apparent actions *for the greater good* or by any other euphemism that *fits the bill*—exclusive of attention to the worst of atrocities that, if necessary, are denied or deferred; disregarded as “conspiracy theory” or discounted as terrorism plotted by a rouge organization, real or imagined. *One by land, two by sea*, and who knows how many from above or beneath us, but what’s coming is *pillar to post*, the whole kit & caboodle, to either yield or be yoked by a *sea-change*.

In the name of science and the advancement of humans, many prominent individuals sincerely called for government eugenics programs in the early 20th century. It was only after the horrors of the Holocaust were revealed to the world that talk of eugenics quickly subsided.³⁵⁰

But such thinking however inhumane, is implacable as *a line in the sand* drawn further from the wash of the sea, the ebb and flow of tides, and the salt that cleanses and heals heart and soul against evil and wicked schemes from *pillar to post*.

³⁴⁹ C.S. Lewis, *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*.

³⁵⁰ “7 Disturbing Eugenics Quotes”, September 30, 2015, <https://www.intellectuالتakeout.org/blog/7-disturbing-eugenics-quotes/>.

“Straight as an arrow,” to mean honest, genuine, trustworthy, aimed to *hit the target* every time. There are those who may be *straight*, sincerely so, and then those who merely claim to be—any surety of their efforts predicted on personal and public power measured in economic, political, financial, and physical terms.

As to economic power or advantage, the tendency is to fight ardently to maintain it,

Whether the advantage is the right to benefit from another’s labor or an unneeded tariff protection, or an exemption from taxation makes no difference. And because the advantage for the few is specific and considerable, while the cost to the disadvantaged many is often hidden and small, the few regularly prevail over the many....³⁵¹

But such is not a secret or *held closely*; indeed, most grow up to realize that such is simply *the way it is* nevertheless forging ahead, seeking-out or eking-out some semblance of a life, living, for as long as it last, considering the relevance of what it means to be without, to have *next to nothing, living in the margins*.

Here however, and perhaps on a global scale, wealth is ever growing for a relative few while diminishing for the balance—a sure indicator of a dying democracy and rising state of fiefdoms.

The concentration of U.S. income and wealth in the hands of the very rich is a new development in my lifetime.³⁵²

That like an arrow to the target, is sure to strike at the bullseye of advantage, leaving the growing disadvantaged disregarded altogether, *cast to the side, pocked with arrow piercings*.

³⁵¹ John Steele Gordon, *An Empire of Wealth – The Epic History of American Economic Power*.

³⁵² Paul Craig Roberts.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Man up, buck up,” is an old one, lending to the idea that a person, however *down* they might be, can willfully *get-up* again, pulling themselves *out of the mud and mire* of (a) trouble or problems—no matter the detail, depth, and their despair.

From another film of yesteryears, *Glory* ³⁵³, a primary character and private of a black regiment of the Union (the Civil War) played by Denzel Washington, is pressed by the Colonel, played by Matthew Broderick, on the question of how they cope with intense prejudice and deprivation amid most of the army (their degradation stemming from slavery). On Matthew’s general question or appeal, “What are you (the black regiment) going to do?”

Denzel replies, “Well I guess we have to ante up and fight like men,” as another form to *man-up*, *buck-up*.

To know or remember the film is possibly to recall that Denzel’s character was an angry man, though seemingly becoming more trusting, more giving and more dedicated to army life despite a background as a runaway, “beaten and chased by hounds,” as another character, Morgan Freeman, characterizes him. Denzel changes, accepting the call to *man-up*, *buck-up* or *ante-up*—to be *all-in*—understanding that his plight, struggle, and survival at the rawest level, is not his alone, as many more are sharing in it, not just prior slaves are black soldiers but white ones too, “dying by the thousands for you, fool,” so continues Morgan after backhanding Denzel as a reprimand.

The time is coming now for many (of us), faced with great adversity, struggle, and survival, to *buck-up...ante-up*. What will or can we each do?

³⁵³ From Wikipedia, *Glory* is a 1989 American historical war drama film about the 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, the Union Army’s first black regiment in the American Civil War.

"Bite the bullet," as to endure a painful or otherwise unpleasant situation that is seen as unavoidable.³⁵⁴ One in the modern day may replay, "That bites," with some association to *biting the bullet*.

Continuing from the last page, the need to *ante-up* will be as never before for many of us, *a great and terrible time*, when courage is needed most, the strength and source of faith and hope tested to the max. Whereas the refrain, "happy days are here again," ³⁵⁵ may have worked leading-up to the *Great Depression*, one may need to look to the more spiritual rather than political and financial given that the later will be much of the *falling-out*, that which inevitably fails as *centralized power always ends up destroying itself*. ³⁵⁶

History teaches us that the capacity for things to get worse is limitless...

It is time to realize, however, that the real dangers to America today come not from the newly rich people of East Asia but from our own ideological rigidity, our deep-seated belief in our own propaganda. ³⁵⁷

³⁵⁴ From Wikipedia, ***bite the bullet***: the phrase was first recorded by Rudyard Kipling in his 1891 novel *The Light that Failed*. It has been suggested that it is derived historically from the practice of having a patient clench a bullet in their teeth as a way to cope with the pain of a surgical procedure without anesthetic, though evidence for biting a bullet rather than a leather strap during surgery is sparse.

³⁵⁵ Again Wikipedia, "**Happy Days Are Here Again**" is a 1929 song, a standard that has been interpreted by various artists. It appeared in the 1930 film *Chasing Rainbows* and was the campaign song for Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1932 presidential campaign.

³⁵⁶ The source(s) of this statement are not referenced but historically, the centralization of powers is always destined to crumble, the end of *checks & balances* resulting in incurable, increasing corruption, *thick as thief*, that *robs from the storehouse* without replenishment, repayment.

³⁵⁷ Chalmers Johnson.

Pondering on points of POWER

“In a nutshell,” as to condense something to its smallest summation; and here it is, the primary motivator for this writing:

Ronald Reagan noted, “Unlike Rome, we have not exploited our empire”. On the contrary, our empire has exploited us, making enormous drains on our resources and energies.³⁵⁸

Exploiting any crisis in the name of democracy, science or some other palatable or respectable cause(s) is the state’s method to growth—only to be exceeded and eventually replaced by a corporatocracy—chiefly by fomenting fears wherein the opportunity grows, a mandate for the state to act.

Such methods are not limited to the state of course, as even the schoolyard bully *plays this game*, but the state’s efforts are not called-down or called-out, the abuses left practically unchecked with the consequences dire, repeated *in spades* with all dismissal and denial of cause or culpability that of policy.

The abuse(s) of the state and its ilk are everywhere, from the devaluation of life, liberty and currency to the national debt and budget deficits—all of which stems from power gone awry.

Moreover, the sheer size and complexity of imperial power and the expanded role of the military make it difficult to impose fiscal discipline and accountability. Corruption becomes endemic, not only abroad but at home. The most dangerous type of corruption for a democracy is measured not in monetary terms alone but in the kind of ruthless power relations it fosters in domestic politics.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁸ Chalmers Johnson, *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire*.

³⁵⁹ Sheldon S. Wolin, *Democracy Incorporated: Managed Democracy and the Specter of Inverted Totalitarianism - New Edition*.

“Tough nut to crack,” means something or someone difficult to deal with, to understand, an unsolvable problem, an enigma.

In *Master and Commander* ³⁶⁰, the nemesis of the central figure and Royal Navy of the early 1800s is a French privateer described as *a tough nut to crack*, the *Acheron*. In the climax, the undersized British ship and skilled commander of *Surprise* wins by appearing as a whaler ship, rather than a frigate, using the illusion to outflank and take the other, approaching in stealth and then springing the trap. And while concocting this scheme, the commander is reminded by his surgeon that they, the British, are predator while the much superior French, is the prey—however under-classed the British by convention, seemingly measured by the number of cannons.

Perception or illusion is real, poignant, palatable, powerful. Though seen or heard, it is not actually so—or purposely not altogether true—but still very effective is shaping sentiments, shaking the senses, and sending some *running into the hills*, taking flight from fear that is fomented by formalized *fake news*. ³⁶¹

More recently, we’ve reached the lowest common denominator, and populism, politics and media have dispensed with old-fashioned values such as truth, honor and chivalry, to the point of arguing, in an Orwellian way, that “up is down”, “wrong is right”, and “truth is fake news”. ³⁶²

³⁶⁰ From Wikipedia, *Master and Commander* is a 2003 film based on a series of books written Patrick O’Brian.

³⁶¹ *Fake news* was made popular by Trump, using the phrase casually to discount or dismiss any “news” he considered unfavorable, unflattering. The phrase or slogan refers here to: psyops and the surrounding propaganda; all forms of media that construct or support such schemes of social engineering, the *soft force* of an inverted-totalitarian state.

³⁶² H.M. Forester, *Secret Friends: The Ramblings of a Madman in Search of a Soul*

Pondering on points of POWER

“**No man an island**,” reminds me of a song sang at a *Promise Keepers’* conference ³⁶³; the words pertaining to man’s need for others, a social creature, often desiring a companion, a community. Whereas a well-known song by Paul Simon, “I am a Rock (I am an Island)” ³⁶⁴, has a flare of/for independence or self-direction amid the reality that we (each) need others, both to give and receive love, however rejected one might be (as implied in Simon’s song).

Still, it is hard to generalize about our social needs, that each need another still beyond the days or degrees of dependence most obvious with/when a baby, preferably to/in the last breath.

Beyond or above an island is power that is communal, whether of good influence and prospect, or not, as more deeply the desire.

...the drive for power is potentially endless and boundless. Some people in search of power cannot conceive any limitation to it. Such people as Alexander the Great and Napoleon could have had all the wealth and sex they wanted in the early period of their political life, but they continued to seek more and more power.³⁶⁵

Underscoring that power is both *a means* and *an end*. And this too, the desire for power, is *beyond the days and degrees* of dependence and, for some is a disease stemming from insecurities.

Not all men want to dominate a large number of other persons, but those who do affect the life of many. ³⁶⁶

And can destroy more than an island, fouling the entire sea.

³⁶³ **Promise Keepers** is a para-Christian ministry for men founded by Bill McCartney in the 1990s, conducting gatherings often at sport’s facilities.

³⁶⁴ From Wikipedia, “I am a Rock” was written/produced in 1965. Thematically, it deals with isolation and emotional detachment.

³⁶⁵ Silvano Arieti, *The Will to Be Human*.

³⁶⁶ Arieti.

“Rock my world,” simply to mean that one (you) are amazing, making my world a better place, possibly with sexual orientation though it may strictly be social, sentimental, sudden, or lasting.

Michael Jackson produced a song by a similar title ³⁶⁷, the video just watched for the first and only time, described briefly as a walk-by affection, pursued to a club where Jackson sings, seduces *his desire* while assorted dark characters wait and watch for some action, aggression to follow. In the end, as the club burns to the ground, Jackson recovers his love, both person and passion, suggesting that song and dance go a long way to *win the day*, desire.

One of the images that stands out most, after the sensational staging of this clip (the script quite scant), is how artificial Michael Jackson appears, his face evidently in the later stages of a long series of surgeries, his once complexion taking on a phantom, *plastered* persona, a disfiguration of complete disassociation to his former self.

What is the psychology behind these bizarre alterations is much deeper than I can or could go, but *on the face of it*, is a person deeply disliking of themselves, driven to change who they are by continuously changing how they look or looked? But then he writes,

I'm starting with the man in the mirror, I'm asking him to change his ways; and no message could have been any clearer if you wanna make the world a better place, take a look at yourself, and then make a change!

As in the internal change(s), not the superficial or skin-deep, aside his drive for power as one unable to discern the mirror's reflection as himself; the person not as he was (is) but rather of what he is or was not, however gifted, great his skills and grand his style, his world rocked by insecurities for which no cure can be acquired.

³⁶⁷ Michael Jackson, “You Rock My World” (2001).

Pondering on points of POWER

"In the 11th hour," or at the last possible moment, is a phrase sometimes applied to procrastination, while other times, a surprising but spectacular finish as with sports: *winning in the stretch* or "coming out of nowhere," or as coined "the comeback kid."

On possibly a more profound application of this idiom is with (or in) the predictions of the earth, its end; that presently, we (the inhabitants) are not only in *the 11th hour* but are largely responsible for it, the exploitation of the earth's resources, a series of manmade catastrophes of the industrial and post-industrial ages.

The real problem is that there are too many of us using too many resources too fast...oil has enabled us to do that. We use oil to increase the rate at which we extract all other resources...everything from topsoil to freshwater, from aluminum to zinc...that has led us to our modern crisis of global disturbance known as climate change, or global warming.³⁶⁸

But what if this *global warming* is not altogether true?

The theory of man-made global warming and climate change based on human greenhouse gas emissions is the greatest international scientific fraud ever perpetrated on the world's citizens!³⁶⁹

Given the exploitive history of the state and its ilk, what is the possibility that *the 11th hour* is more about *the last days*, as marked from the ascension of Christ, and not about the environment and specifically the exploitive history of humanity? What if the state did not abuse its authority or was not unabashedly corrupt?

³⁶⁸ Ideas Out There, "11th Hour Quotes", Sean Hampton-Cole, September 29, 2014, <https://seanhamptoncole.wordpress.com/2014/09/29/11th-hour-quotes/>.

³⁶⁹ John Casey, *Dark Winter: How the Sun Is Causing a 30-Year Cold Spell*.

“As the clock strikes 12,” reminds me in this moment of the Bill Haley tune revived during the production of the film *American Graffiti* and the follow-on series *Happy Days*, the song as an intro.³⁷⁰

But in a radically different application of the idiom, so returns “the end”; something major—more so than Cinderella’s coach magically made from a pumpkin—that in the last seconds, real or relative, is big change, perhaps a crisis manifest, irrevocable ruin, *life as we know it*.

If there was an observer on Mars, they would probably be amazed that we have survived this long. There are two problems for our species’ survival - nuclear war and environmental catastrophe - and we’re hurtling towards them. This hypothetical Martian would probably conclude that human beings were an evolutionary error.³⁷¹

In the first possibility, nuclear war, is more the instantaneous while in the second, environmental, is seemingly the incremental, the depletion of resources accentuated from the dawn of the industrial age. Either way, we destroy ourselves for reasons that seem nothing less than mankind’s trouble from *the beginning*, as according to scripture: that although *the creation* was aware of *the creator*, they did not worship so, but instead, pursued their own interests even at the expense of others, deceiving and being deceived, destroying, and destroyed.

³⁷⁰ From Wikipedia, *American Graffiti* is a 1973 American coming-of-age comedy film directed by George Lucas, produced by Francis Ford Coppola, loosely based on the Lucas’ teenage years in Modesto California. *Happy Days* is an American sitcom television series, set in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, revolving around teenager Richie Cunningham, his family, close friends and the iconic Fonzie, and a light-hearted version of the teen life.

³⁷¹ Noam Chomsky.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Against the wall,” as to have *nowhere to turn*, no way out; without options, the means to move, *running against the wind*, the end of the fight if not the end of life.

Walls are physical but also figurative; the first as the “real thing” and the second as a constraint in one direction or another.

We all build internal sea walls to keep at bay the sadness of life and the overwhelming forces within our minds. In whatever way we do this—through love, work, family, faith, friends, denial, alcohol, drugs, or medication—we build these walls, stone by stone, over a lifetime. ³⁷²

And it is in or around these *internal sea walls*, that one may lock themselves in with no way out, though attempting to lock others out, but still seemingly “...safe within my room, I touch no one and no one touches me”. ³⁷³ But,

It is an absolute human certainty that no one can know his own beauty or perceive a sense of his own worth until it has been reflected to him in the mirror of another loving, caring human being. ³⁷⁴

And impossible as it may be, given all the hurt that one endures, the best possible response is to keep loving—as I tell myself from time to time—not because it feels good or better, but because it is the best we can possibly be in a world that deceives and destroys, that seeks us each as *a lion to a lamb*, with a ferocious appetite of and for power to see us *undone, against the wall, with no way out, at the end of our rope*, for their effort, enthusiasm, and even entertainment.

³⁷² Kay Redfield Jamison, *An Unquiet Mind: A Memoir of Moods and Madness*.

³⁷³ From Paul Simons, “I am a Rock,” the lyrics describe isolation ostensibly as a means of emotional protection.

³⁷⁴ John Joseph Powell, *The Secret of Staying in Love*.

“Rock and a hard place,” is to continue from the last, where one is *up against the wall* whether self-induced or through external forces. And still, as has been repeated, we need each other given that,

Man was born for society...however little he may be attached to the world. He never can wholly forget it, or bear to be wholly forgotten by it.

And even for those

Disgusted at the guilt or absurdity of mankind, the misanthrope [who] flies from it...resolves to become a hermit and buries himself in the cavern of some gloomy rock, while hate inflames his bosom, possibly contented with his situation.

But with time,

His passions begin to cool [as] time mellow[s] his sorrows and heal[s] those wounds which he bore with him to his solitude, [who thought] content his companion.

And he begins to feel

All the monotony of his way of living, and his heart becomes [weary]. He looks around and finds himself alone....

But because

The love of society revives in his bosom, and pants to return to that world which He has abandoned.

And unless he is somehow saved from this *rock and a hard place*, what remains for him is an existence

Despondent and dissatisfied, [waking] only to pass a day as joyless, as monotonous as the former.³⁷⁵

³⁷⁵ Matthew Gregory Lewis, *The Monk*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Take a hike,” goes without further description, as with *get lost* or *don’t let the door hit you in the back* or *hit the road* (Jack).

But another angle to this possibility, this action, is when one does not have to be told or ordered to leave but rather chooses to go, to skedaddle, given similar phrases such as “Gotta get out this place,” as sounded off by a 1960s song by the same title.³⁷⁶ This sense or message (of the song) is one urgency, a plea to leave—with haste, without reservation or regret, and *no looking back* is to what might have happened...should the two (again, the song) stayed, tried to *stick it out*. And though the song may apply to a domestic lifestyle, two young folks *sweating it out* in a big city, the same is also attached to Vietnam through films as *Good Morning Vietnam*³⁷⁷.

And whether *in country* or in the city, the risks and dangers were (and possibly will be) legion, *the times a-change-in*, casting doubt on or disregard for the notion expressed, “It could never happen here,”³⁷⁸ as no longer, all such “We’re better than that,” *put to bed*, challenged to *stay the course* against *ever rising waters*.

³⁷⁶ From Wikipedia, “We gotta get out of this place,” is a rock song written by Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil and recorded as a 1965 hit single by the Animals. It has become an iconic song of its type and was immensely popular with United States Armed Forces GIs during the Vietnam War.

³⁷⁷ From Song facts, Adrian Cronauer (the movie *Good Morning Vietnam* was based on his life) mentioned that this was the most requested song on Armed Forces Radio when he was in Vietnam.

³⁷⁸ The last phrase, *times a-change-in*, referring to another popular song of that era and since then, written by Bob Dylan and covered by long list of artists. **It could never happen here**, is taken from one or more books of similar title that give pause and cause those conditions of historical, heinous acts of humanity (often focused in Nazi Germany) are **not** restricted to regional, race, or religion.

“Hit the road,” to continue from the previous page, but again from the standpoint that one reacts or takes action on their own; yes, one decides that the time has come (or is here) to, as the Brits say, “Pack it in,” and *get on down the road, find another gig*.

Persons have been moving since time began and indeed the U.S. is the most mobile of all nations; citizen as well as residents, transits of one kind or another, looking for or fulfilling opportunity, or simply a better situation if that’s possible. As I describe this personal decision and action, California, New York City, and other such places—where apparently *life has taken a turn* for the worse, ostensibly due to extremes in or with a COVID response—are moving on. ³⁷⁹

To add to this mass movement is, or will be, increasing and intensifying circumstances to further limit individual liberties including that to travel or relocate. Compared with the lockdowns of the last year (2021), the controls surrounding *the circumstances* will be of such measure and magnitude as to scarcely recognize the social and cultural aspects that imply or express freedom, individual rights or other privileges presumed as entitlements. And in and through such times, *the road* is ours to miss—not *hit*—as the means to and measure of mobility comes *full stop*, the *long arm and heavy hand* of the state taken to new length, weight, and force.

³⁷⁹ Generally, the response to COVID is unmatched in effect on U.S. society, forcing the closing of schools, churches, and businesses—as has never happened in the history of contagions—lending to a host of economic, public, and private problems precipitated by/with varying degrees of severity, state policy, and social engineering, ushering in new degrees of statism, invasive and intractable.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Zip it**,” is another of the well-used, and as a reminder was the fatherly instruction of Doctor Evil (Mike Myers) in one form or another, for silence from the son, *too smart for his own britches*.

But this comedic form aside, or even its inspirations of agents serving in some form of their own from the women to the wine, the duties of the debonair detective, is that *zip-it* may be, as to *take a hike* or *hit the road*, a personal choice and not another’s demand.

Never allow anyone to take you out of character, some people know which buttons to press. (Zip it instead) ³⁸⁰

For there is a time to be silent, to listen and not be heard, to observe and not draw attention, to submit and not struggle as it applies to those we care about—and especially for them whom we love and that may love in return, the struggle and sacrifices therein. And more, as the Scriptures call, a believer is love even those that despise them, even “those that persecute...,” which is hardly conceivable in and of ourselves, left to us, our nature.

But when Christ made such a calling, *to love the Lord with all heart, soul, and mind and to love our neighbor as ourselves*³⁸¹, the aim or arrangement was one to one, an individual—not an institution, a system, a state or a corporatocracy. When Christ addressed the Sadducees as “a brood of vipers,” the invective was not aimed at any one person but rather to the group or organization clearly inculcated in a form of religion too proud to identify and accept Jesus as Lord, too blind to see and admit their sins, lacking humility, repentance, and the faith necessary for salvation.

³⁸⁰ Charmaine J. Forde.

³⁸¹ Considered as “the greatest commandment”, Matthew 22:37 was central to both laws and prophets.

“Zero tolerance,” seems to be associated with unacceptable or bad behavior(s), but infers or confers a policy of absolutes, not arbitrary forms of punishment to include subjective judgments. ³⁸²

Zero tolerance is a term or condition of the state, of authorities within the public sphere or in some way beholden to it, governed by it or potentially liable for any determined deviations—as conditionally deemed— from it, policy, process, or practice.

There is much to consider against the growing arbitrary so-called “laws”, the controls for and constraints of contrarian forms acclaimed as “sensitive”, “inclusionary”, fair, and equitable— compared with hate, terrorism, and other crimes against the state. But consider younger, innocent, for who

We need to allow children to try and fail.... At the same time, we also need to provide balance by not setting policies that will magnify one mistake, like drug use or fighting, into a life-derailing catastrophe. Unfortunately, this is exactly what our current “zero tolerance” policies [do].

And while firm (not contrarian) forms of school discipline(s) seem respectable taken alone, there are “arbitrary forms” that, taken together, create two worlds: one for the powerless and one for the powerful

The possession of arbitrary power has always, the world over, tended irresistibly to destroy humane sensibility, magnanimity, and truth. ³⁸³

³⁸² From Wikipedia, a **zero-tolerance** policy is one which imposes a punishment for every infraction of a stated rule. Zero-tolerance policies forbid people in positions of authority from exercising discretion or changing punishments to fit the circumstances subjectively; they are required to impose a pre-determined punishment regardless of individual culpability, extenuating circumstances, or history. This pre-determined punishment, whether mild or severe, is always meted out.

“**You’re on,**” as to accept a challenge, to *bring it on* and *may the best, ah, man win*. But then what (if/of, where and when), the challenge(s) that come before us or that we seek out whether one, the other or both, the uncertainty that you may not win, you may not even stand a chance, playing with folly, a fight you will surely lose.

To use the above response(s) suggest that at least the one is sure, confident, and otherwise up for the challenge albeit the unknowns, the things not seen (prior) or perceived, met perhaps with banter sprinkled with some bluffing, that may end short of brawl, blood, bodily damage and most of all, the humiliation of loss.

But then a fight, a *knockdown, drag-out* that is messy, possibly maiming, even murderous, while the crowd comes and then parts with a story to tell or a secret to unveil, of who did what to whom with all the details real or imagined. Yes, there are *crowds without any skin in the game*, always *the crowds*, but only the one that loses, only one bearing the blows, humiliation and possibly the hammer of justice should some disorderly conduct be on the docket. But as fights go or don’t go, and by all other matters therein,

There is one fairly good reason for fighting—and that is, if the other man starts it. You see, wars are a great wickedness, perhaps the greatest wickedness of a wicked species. They are so wicked that they must not be allowed. When you can be perfectly certain that the other man started them, then is the time when you might have a sort of duty to stop them.³⁸⁴

And if you should not fight, but take flight, remember that,

The bravest people are the ones who don’t mind looking like cowards (who are humble in spirit).

³⁸³ Frederick Law Olmsted.

³⁸⁴ T.H. White, *The Once and Future King*.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“**You wish**,” to mean something like, “If you were so lucky,” or “Not in a million years,” or “In your dreams”.

What do you wish for, your greatest desire or want?

Once again, a favorite film: a depiction of the events just prior and following Christ’s crucifixion, ³⁸⁵ where a Roman Tribune is asked by Pilate (the Roman governor) a similar question, “What do you seek,” on which the Tribune says, “A Day without death.”

Flash forward, the same question discussed between the now rouge Tribune and Christ incarnate, another one-on-one, but in this conversation, the clairvoyance or all-knowing Christ asks a similar question following with the same response (so in other words, Christ knows...though not present at at/in the one-on-one conversation of the Tribune and Pilate perhaps weeks earlier).

To wish is more the fantasy for children, *to wish upon a star* or to make a wish before blowing out the candles, but we each want to believe that wishes are real whatever the magic or mystery around them, however it happens to happen, our *dreams come true*. There is power in believing...but then in what or who, where and when to believe or to place one’s faith, trust, and devotion?

To believe is to go beyond...and *boldly go* into a *place* we cannot see, comprehend, convinced that the premise of our belief(s) is not *child’s play*—though driven by desperation or deep desire for relief, respite or recompense in reaction to the real or perceived threat, fear, whether prevailing or *here today and gone tomorrow*.

³⁸⁵ From Wikipedia, **Risen** is features a fictional leading character, a Roman Tribune sent by Pontius Pilate to expedite a crucifixion already in progress. Three days later he is appointed to investigate the rumors of a risen Jewish Messiah. Pilate orders him to locate the missing body of Yeshua, one of the crucified men. In doing so, Pilate seeks to quell an imminent uprising in Jerusalem before the Emperor arrives.

Pondering on points of POWER

“You’ve made your bed,” to imply or infer that you are responsible for your ordeal, a situation, a problem or even a crisis; that you have no one to blame but yourself, so it appears or is, however one accepts it so, assumes or admits responsibility—or dismisses any responsibility, perhaps *a big pill to swallow*.

There are alternatives however, where one can *hide behind* another, attempting to avoid cause or perhaps the matter altogether, seeking to shield themselves from any charge or culpability; not that the matter is a “crime”, but rather that it can at the least look poorly on a person, possibly diminishing or tarnishing their reputation, standing, even trustworthiness. To be at fault in one thing but to deny or dismiss it takes *the whole affair to another level*.

Limited to a single person as a “personal” matter, the denial or dismissive act(s) might only involve a relative few, a family and children, however the outcome or result whether renewal and restoration or a rift, one member divided from another, the family broken irreparably. Beyond personal matters, the professional or public sphere, the effect(s) is much larger of course, with the worst of/in men *carried far and away, from here to eternity*.

Atrocity is recognized as such by victim and perpetrator alike, by all who learn about it at [seemingly] removed. Atrocity has no excuses, no mitigating argument. Atrocity never balances or rectifies the past. Atrocity merely arms the future for more atrocity. It is self-perpetuating....³⁸⁶

And atrocity does not know accountability—else the worst of/in men would not be so atrocious, so deep and dark both in the act and the anonymity, *the bed made and kept*, no stains of any sort, no wrinkles to

³⁸⁶ Frank Herbert, *Children of Dune*.

“Your call,” as expressed, “What’s your opinion or view,” which is important if/as one earnestly seeks to understand, comprehend; to really *give a care* about a matter, not merely a casual or cursory glance, or to courageously take it own wherever or from whatever the motivation or drive comes.

There are plenty of opinions to go around from the *talking heads* to the heady remarks of some high-profile figure *spouting-off* an endorsement or a quip aimed for attention at none other than themselves, another self-absorbed act or actor amid the adoring—who accept no less from their gods for after all,

If someone isn't what others want them to be, the others become angry. Everyone seems to have a clear idea of how other people should lead their lives, but none about his or her own. ³⁸⁷

To say that self-opinion is the least pointed and poignant of all, lending to the *worst of/in men*, turpitude on a scale that has no comparison in nature but is left to *the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms*.

One may think more highly of themselves but then less so, a kind of resignation that they are less, and always will be. One may fain to be *low* or worse may pose as a victim, their innocence above reproach while perpetrators lurk about from the few of one’s adversaries to the many as existential threats to the safety and security of *the better man*. And to this common feature of our society, *your call* should understand that,

Baseless victimhood is usually the last stage before outright aggression. ³⁸⁸

³⁸⁷ Paulo Coelho, *The Alchemist*.

³⁸⁸ Stefan Molyneux.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Where there’s a will,” there is potential to *go beyond* and to *sail forth and to seek and find*. But from where does this human will come from and to whom does it find, keep, or stay?

One may want of/for something for themselves, specific or general, as to their *station in life* or beyond that, for someone else, perhaps a relation or affection, family, or friend. But then the human will is not always right or good, caring or curing, but more is ill-willed, their aims for “an advantage” or to outright destroy..., their self deeply distressed, demented, even self-destructive.

Good and evil both increase at compound interest. That is why the little decisions you and I make every day are of such infinite importance. [A small but] good act today is the capture of a strategic point from which, a few months later, you may be able to go on to victories you never dreamed of.³⁸⁹

To human will, the limits are far reaching, extending into the *cause and effect* in ways that one cannot grasp or even grapple with, as to what happened or why, one “good” *act* leading to another.

But for/to the other side, a big, bad act that is made, always justified but never right, sets the stage for yet more..., both breadth and depth of destruction, the cause & effect either denied or dismissed by powers gone awry, abuses of the generations, leaving a legacy of struggle for those deeply touched—brought to despair or left bereft of even the basic needs of life—the consequence of wicked and *rulers, authorities and powers of the dark world and to evil forces in the heavenly realms*³⁹⁰ that *sow and reap* destruction on individual lives with bad intentions, the will to make bad.

³⁸⁹ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*.

³⁹⁰ Ephesians 6:11-12.

“**There’s a way**,” though, as “a way” has it, the direction and/or intention may not be for good, either for the one or the other, the possibilities of a *cause and effect* turning bad not only on *the other* but also on *the one* (as like what the CIA coined as “blowback”³⁹¹).

The consequence(s) of one’s actions, intentional in some degree, can *turn south* leaving them less than what they were or wanted to be and, in the worst of outcomes (for them), powerless to *make good* or *gloss-over* their schemes as something less so, a mere mistake or unfortunate outcome with other misdirection—not the least of which is that someone else is at fault, the cause, ultimately responsible.

At the root of *a way gone bad*, driven with the intent for/of destruction, is a fear; yes, a fear that transcends one’s conscience, their act(s) in defiance with their natural sense of the wrong with the classic, child-like example of denying or lying, attempting to *save your butt*, going so far as to blame another for as long as the scheme(s) succeed. And while such behavior is expected of children, such carried to age becomes troubling by orders of magnitude both *cause and effect*, a psychosis or mental illness.

Children have a chance still, young and young-at-heart, to realize that *a way gone bad* will invariably *bite them in the butt*, but with each passing experience left undone, they become spoiled, *a bad way* works..., and thus such borne to badness. And to carry the possibility further is when the child-like behavior is internally justified on notions that “I deserve this,” or “He had it coming,” or such self-victimization that seemingly gives right to outright murder if for no other reason that, “She reminded me of my mother.”

³⁹¹ **Blowback** is the unintended adverse results of a political action or situation.

Pondering on points of POWER

"**A way forward**," as to carry the last page to the possibility that one (adult-like) will seek to *make good* from *the bad* or, at the least, come to terms with transgressions; and this possibility notably challenging beginning with me, my own transgressions either private or made public, but humbly admitting to wrong and, if possible, seeking forgiveness, even restoration on some level.³⁹²

Without such *a way forward*, any remaining relations is all but *shot* for those who are sound, accepting the matter(s) as is: irresolvable, unamendable, or simply stalled in the stubbornness of stupidity of behavior unbecoming adults. Otherwise, misery is shared on both ends; the one who gives and gives and the one opposite, taking and taking without so much of *an ounce* of appreciation or respect or *budging an inch* against the taking.

He had never regarded other men as anything but puppets of a sort, created to fill up an empty world. He divided them into two classes: those he greeted because some chance had put him in contact with them, and those he did not greet. But both these categories of individuals were equally insignificant in his eyes.³⁹³

And as naturally occurring in such one-sided relations, fatigue, and exhaustion set-in leaving the one beleaguered while the stalwart, is a bastion of sociopathic strength bolstered by the self-delusion as the victim—always!

She's sociopathic. She will have no moral compunction in doing whatever is in her interests. It's as simple as that.³⁹⁴

The full burden of blame and shame, left to the sensitive, the sensible, whose sacred duty transcends such treatment.

³⁹² The **12 Steps of AA** as an inspiration and instruction on such.

³⁹³ "An Old Man", Guy de Maupassant.

³⁹⁴ Alexander McCall Smith, *The Sunday Philosophy Club*.

“Do as the romans,” or as anyone or anybody who thinks they are gods, the highest and mightiest of mankind, lending from earlier references to the Romans, the empire and not the book of the Bible, which brings my writing to this: a comparison of the good, the bad and the ugly.

What happens then when good and bad clash whether within or among us? Consider love, referring to the previous page on relations, unhealthy and undone.

If our decisions about how to treat others are always motivated by love for God, a singular love for God, we really do not have to worry about the law, because the law reflects what is pleasing to God.

Which is to say that love, real love, is possible when we each forgive no matter what or how we’re treated (or mistreated) by another and, conversely, that we seek forgiveness when at fault, intended or otherwise. For,

Saint Augustine said, “Love God and do what you want.” If you love God, you can do as you please, because you will be doing what pleases God. It is that simple. If you really love him, you will be pleased by what pleases him, and what pleases him is revealed to us in his law.³⁹⁵

And to consider more, that my addressing the above, love and forgiveness in the face of foul treatment however cruel or condemning it be, is my challenge, my need whatever anger I choose to retain or bitterness that collects along that pathway. Yes, and thanks to Christ who commands us to love, to forgive and to live a life holy and pleasing to him, as the book of Romans doth tell us.

³⁹⁵ R. C. Sproul, *Romans*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Wild and woolly...,” can probably mean a lot of things, but for now I choose it as offensive, confrontational, and intrusive, an affront to *our better angels* or what *father knows best*.

As this page is completed, and for some time now, a prevailing belief (of mine) is that *hard times* are coming, economic and social, on a scale that that I (possibly you) cannot comprehend, conceive—the likes of which will change things forever, ushering us into a world order of governance.

I believe that, owing to men's folly, a world-government will only be established by force, and will therefore be at first cruel and despotic. But I believe that it is necessary for the preservation of a scientific civilization, and that, if once realized, it will gradually give rise to the other conditions of a tolerable existence.³⁹⁶

This *world order* or technocracy as necessary for both communications and control internationally, though as with the empires of the ages, both tyranny and totalitarianism as never before.

If one really believed in the reliability and permanence of an international arrangement, such schemes for providing the authority with 'hostages' might be more efficient, even more humane, than providing it with bombers and shock troops. One could even go further and let the force have a monopoly of critical medicines to use for bacterial warfare on a transgressor country. As soon as it starts an epidemic, it sends its medical units in to make sure that no one suffers who cooperates.³⁹⁷

Yes...as never before, *wild and woolly*, this world order will be an order of magnitude in keeping with that foretold in the scriptures, by prophets and such.

³⁹⁶ Bertrand Russell.

³⁹⁷ Thomas C. Schelling.

“...**And way out**,” as expressed, “Out there,” or to the extremes, “In the stratosphere, *zoned out* or *in a different world*.”

And a *different world* is coming; one radically different than what I or you know, conceive; and one as never before, unprecedented in scope, scale, and strategy—as science by any name will have it.³⁹⁸

My basic hypothesis is this: the people who run the media are humanities graduates with little understanding of science, who wear their ignorance as a badge of honor. Secretly, deep down, perhaps they resent the fact that they have denied themselves access to the most significant developments in the history of Western thought from the past two hundred years; but there is an attack implicit in all media coverage of science: in their choice of stories, and the way they cover them, the media create a parody of science.³⁹⁹

And is it (the message or meaning) to simply mention “science”, without so much as a reference, data, or research? Is it enough to simply say, “Four out of five dentist recommend...,” without necessarily calling out the survey, the when, where and who?

There are many ways in which journalists can mislead a reader with science: they can *cherry-pick* the evidence or massage the statistics; they can pit hysteria and emotion against cold, bland statements from authority figures.

And they can lie in other ways, outright or by omission, all of which is to foment fear as the *sure cure* for courage let alone the critical thinking that begins with motive or intention let alone the source(s).

³⁹⁸ **Science** here includes all sciences (physical, biological, social, and political) and anything attached to it. For example, politics conveniently draws on science (or exploits it) calling it out by name, expounding on it as justification for directives and orders—when in fact, true science has been subordinated, used and abused, as means to an end, expedience at any cost.

³⁹⁹ Ben Goldacre, *Bad Science*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Water under the bridge,” (*over the dam*), as *spilt milk*, or any other that suggest it’s behind you (us) and thus is no longer a factor, consideration, concern, or constraint. And to this idea, enter *Woke* as it stumps across America, entering the young ones more so along with the corporations from which it spawns, is hatched, presumably yet another form of conditioning, conforming, compliance of or by very fearful *herd*, comforted only by what it is told however little truth prevails.

To begin with *Woke*, not yet *under the bridge* but more approaching it, appearing as a crystal spring but in fact as foul, slack water, tainted by totalitarianism whereby what you say, do and think is monitored and managed, your life “safe/secure” from the dreaded callout of extremist, terrorists or any other such designators pinned to those who fail to *float downstream*, wallowing in refuse of such rhetoric aimed at nothing more than to *own you*, to herd us to the corral. But as it should be,

You don’t need everyone to know where you are, what you’re doing, to show how great your life is. You don’t seek approval by shouting into the ether, into what I call the great want-to-be-known. You’re not like the masses—most people lay it all out there at the curb like garbage on trash day, and I’ll tell you what that does—it makes the whole neighborhood stink.⁴⁰⁰

And besides one’s appearance and every detail of lost life is the purposed omission of facts and figures, the reality, and true intentions behind this faux ‘ism.⁴⁰¹

⁴⁰⁰ Britney King, *Water Under the Bridge*.

⁴⁰¹ By **‘ism** referring to any of such classic ideas of controlled society that, while such is tossed around, is merely a façade for the intended fiefdoms from which a small fraction will rule the world, the vast majority.

“A bridge too far,” to follow-on from *water under the bridge, over the dam*, is that concentration/centralization of power always results in self-destruction, the inevitable destiny of empires and their ilk no matter the nature of their peoples.

It was an article of faith to the Romans that they were the most morally upright people in the world. How else was the size of their empire to be explained? Yet they also knew that the Republic's greatness carried its own risks. To abuse it would be to court divine anger. Hence the Roman's concern to refute all charges of bullying, and to insist they had won their empire purely in self-defense.⁴⁰²

And are the seemingly limitless abuses of power that compound in the conquest—the conquering of not only the external...but also the internal, the many lost in *the smoke and fog* of foreign conflicts.

The Romans have provided a lot of writers with a model for various interstellar empires, of course, and no wonder. The Roman Empire is a really good example of a large empire that, in one form or another, functioned for quite a long time over a very large area. And over all that time, there was all sorts of exciting drama – civil wars and assassinations and revolts and bits breaking off and being forced back in⁴⁰³

And yet the tragedy continues, the plight and problems of humankind; that man's worst enemy in the physical world is man and that often the many are misled on the myth or mantra that, “We are different,” or “We're better than that,” while proudly edging toward an end where, looking down, it's all over but the shouting for all but those that stopped short of *the bridge too far*, refused, resisted as action to the single response, “No”.

⁴⁰² Tom Holland, *Rubicon: The Last Years of the Roman Republic*.

⁴⁰³ Ann Leckie, *Ancillary Justice*.

“Wouldn’t be caught dead,” referring to a detestable place, one’s reputation, or even their soul, is at risk so they think; this idiom sometimes used as hyperbola or simply to press the point, “You won’t catch me there!” And as an example, though dated, the once-movie star Tony Curtis⁴⁰⁴ quipped, “I wouldn’t be caught dead marrying a woman old enough to be my wife.”

But besides this actor and his apparent attraction to younger women, was a film most noted, *Spartacus* that featured him cast with Kirk Douglass as a legendary warrior. ⁴⁰⁵ Spartacus and a small band lead a rebellion that eventually expanded to more a multi-cultural cause, and though eventually defeated by the Romans, the rebels are vaunted for much victory and valor along the way. From the film ⁴⁰⁶ directed by Stanley Kubrick, *Spartacus* makes clear the lot of a slave, saying,

We've traveled a long way together. We've fought many battles and won many victories. Now, instead of taking ships to our homes across the sea, we must fight again once more. Maybe there's no peace in this world, for us or for anyone else, I don't know. But I do know that as long as we live, we must remain true to ourselves.

Would I be *caught dead* being untrue is a question for thought; one that brings to the fore our nature, who we each are and are not.

⁴⁰⁴ From Wikipedia, **Tony Curtis** (1925-2010) acted in more than 100 films in roles covering a wide range of genres, from light comedy to serious drama, his Hollywood career spanning more than six decades.

⁴⁰⁵ From Wikipedia, ***Spartacus***, was an escaped slave in the Third Servile War, a major slave uprising against the Roman Republic, becoming first a gladiator and then accomplished military leader.

⁴⁰⁶ Again Wikipedia, the film is an American epic historical drama film directed by Stanley Kubrick, and based on the 1951 novel of the same title by Howard Fast. It is inspired by the life story of Spartacus

“**Wash hands of what,**” as a variation on the figurative expression said as, “I wash my hands of _____,” to symbolize that, like Pilate as Roman Governor ⁴⁰⁷, one might attempt to recuse themselves of cause, blame or fault simply by a declaration and public *washing of hands*—as superficial show or display.

It is ridiculous to consider that a word and washing is enough to remove Pilate of responsibility (since, according to scriptures, he oversees the so-called hearing, ultimately sentencing Christ first to a scourging and then to execution). Simply expressed, “How can one declare their own recusal when conducting the event to its apparent end,” except by/with the power to declare it so.

In the recent film *Risen* (as previously referenced), Pilate is obsessed with ending the whole matter of Yeshua; one, to simply get the Sadducees *off his back*, but more because of the impending arrival of the emperor and the need to quell any uprising that threatens order. Meeting with his Tribune, Clavius, Pilate the prefect explains the apparent property damage near about.

Every hot headed and holy fool in Judea was here stirring havoc; some mystics, [when] one of the following vibes *making waves* to the Sanhedrin decided to put him down. He sent a mob here, screaming for his blood, because he claims to be their Messiah. I had to crucify him.

And he had to wash his hands of it too, setting himself free of matters of which he not only caused but that he created in his politics and public place.

⁴⁰⁷ From Wikipedia, **Pontus Pilate** was the fifth governor of the Roman province of Judaea, He is best known today for being the official who presided over the trial of Jesus and later ordered his crucifixion. Pilate's importance in modern Christianity is underscored by his prominent place in both the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Well-to-do**,” is a reference to folks that are financially well-off, wealthy, rich, no matter how it came to be. In my recollection on what seemed the status of one, their comment attached to a news video, was a description of their property and possession coupled with the notion that, given such, they are insulated from any major effects economic, social-political or of such potential. One might say or believe themselves so...that their *well-to-do* position is protection enough. In truth, they are at greater (or greatest) risk, for those who have the most have the most to lose; that like the slave whose life is so low that even death seems more the repose, a relief, the poor or not-so-well-to-do will obviously be less affected by major swings as suggested in the subject video.

We are headed for a much worse financial crisis than the one we experienced in '08 [2008] and we are headed for a much greater recession than we lived through following that crisis; the one we called the Great Recession. And what's going to make it so much worse is, it's going to be inflationary. Consumer prices are going be going up as the economy is going down.⁴⁰⁸

Not to know the prowess or power of any or all the *well-to-do*, but any shift of wealth to non-dollar dominations does not necessarily ensure retention; after all, the government confiscated gold in the last century⁴⁰⁹ and could similarly abscond all forms of one's property and possession *at the drop of a hat*, the force of state once more to apply in the auspicious occasion to thief and steal.

⁴⁰⁸ Peter Schiff.

⁴⁰⁹ From Wikipedia: **Executive Order 6102** is an executive order signed on April 5, 1933, by US President Franklin D. Roosevelt "forbidding the hoarding of gold coin, gold bullion, and gold certificates within the continental United States." The executive order was made under the authority of the Trading with the Enemy Act of 1917, as amended by the Emergency Banking Act in March 1933.

“Not a pot to piss in,” is one that harkens back to the days of a *nightjar* or simply a pot to hold one’s piss till morning, the idiom implies that one has lost everything, all property and possession and perhaps more if that is possible.

As they lived through the most desperate winter the country had known since the Continental Army camped at Valley Forge, the American people waited for the end of the Hoover presidency and the accession to the White House of the Hudson River aristocrat they had elected overwhelmingly. ⁴¹⁰

Did or does a new presidential administration count; that is, can one group succeed where the prior has or will not?

As to The Great Depression, the transition did nothing of significance to change things as,

The big question about the American depression is not whether war with Germany and Japan ended it. It is why the Depression lasted until that war. From 1929 to 1940, from Hoover to Roosevelt, government intervention helped to make the Depression Great. ⁴¹¹

Leaving lasting impressions about the depression, about banks and their money, about property and possession, and about the things we can control and the things we cannot...despite our doubts and deception.

There is some certainty that in times of uncertainty there are at least a few who know what is coming, any possibilities for better or worse, the triggers and even the effects. In this understanding is power to prepare for at least something if not everything, to have a *pot to piss in* and perhaps more as planning and effort enable.

⁴¹⁰ *An Empire of Wealth*, John Steel Gordon.

⁴¹¹ Amity Shlaes, *The Forgotten Man: A New History of the Great Depression*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Wouldn’t dream of it,” is another of the *wouldn’t be caught dead*; the *dream* leaning in the direction of the inconceivable or unthinkable, never to be tried let alone thought of/about (again). But then “it” happens; the inconceivable is conceived and more is *staring you right in the face*. From the film, *The Princess Bride*,

Vizzini: He didn’t fall?! Inconceivable!

Inigo Montoya: You keep using that word. I do not think it means what you think it means.

Or maybe you (they) really did not consider that the “inconceivable” is not only conceivable but is thinkable as to mean that if something has happened before, it can happen again and still, if it has not happened, it can.... The past not always a predictor of the future.

Prediction is very difficult, especially about the future. ⁴¹²

But then there are the signs, the signals, and the statistics, that bring to bear the possibility if not certainty of events, whatever the size or scope, that can or will occur, or in the case of Ray Bradbury,

I was not predicting *the future*—I was trying to prevent it.

To say that, while attempting to recall *Fahrenheit 451* ⁴¹³, is that the future is certain to further distort reality, past and present, making prediction that much more difficult, daunting beyond our dreams, *the dead* to either die or lay in wait for a dream come true, while we each either dread or despair or face the day with hope and courage.

⁴¹² Niels Bohr, a Danish physicist.

⁴¹³ From Wikipedia, ***Fahrenheit 451*** is a 1953 dystopian novel by American writer Ray Bradbury. Often regarded as one of his best works the novel presents a future American society where books are outlawed, and "firemen" burn any that are found.

"Dream on," is like the last (page), the object as "dream", though it best expressed as, "Not in million years," or "It ain't gonna happen!"

The rock band Aerosmith produced a song by the same title, ⁴¹⁴ with the lyrics beginning as,

Every time when I look in the mirror,

All these lines on my face getting clearer.

The past is gone,

And it went by, like dusk to dawn.

Isn't that the way?

Everybody's got their dues in life to pay.

Yeah, I know nobody knows,

Where it comes and where it goes.

I know it's everybody's sin,

You got to lose to know how to win.

Ending with,

Sing with me, sing for the year,

Sing for the laughter and sing for the tear,

Sing with me if it's just for today,

Maybe tomorrow, the good Lord will take you away.

To learn to live from fools (including me) and from sages, you know it's true, all things come back to you, dream on, dream on...and while one cannot fitter their life away dreaming, it is interesting to do whether intentionally or in our sleep.

⁴¹⁴ From Wikipedia, "**Dream On**" is a power ballad by Aerosmith from their 1973 debut album, Aerosmith. it peaked at number 59 on the Billboard Hot 100.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Beyond the veil,” is one not familiar, but it means: an inexplicable or concealed place or condition, especially the mysterious state of existence after death.

In the certainty, the finality, of death lies the often described *unknown*, one too figuratively *far away* to have or hold a sense of the future save one’s hope, faith, that eternity is waiting for those true to God’s message, meaning and ministry. As it is,

No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it’s not the same river and he’s not the same man. ⁴¹⁵

To underscore that change in certain, our lives from here to eternity, the likes of which we cannot each fully conceive let alone consider in all that’s complete or completed.

We’re always thinking of eternity as an idea that cannot be understood, something immense. But why must it be? ⁴¹⁶

But *time* passes and given this inevitability so too does our time to pass, to go somewhere and never return—so it seems—whether desired or disdained, the disposition in the moment matters not.

In a moment or two, one may fear this certainty, thinking, *I do not want to go*, or *it is too soon*, but how can we believe that when we don’t understand life on this side of things let alone that? Is it not enough to consider that, for what time was given here by one or another, it mattered, matters, the memories?

Do want to *hang-on* to this life to see time work-it-out or carry out some concocted creed that *only the good die young*, when *good* will never die and *bad* will be driven back to never live *beyond the veil*? “Is life better here or there,” depends much on faith and hope.

⁴¹⁵ Heraclitus.

⁴¹⁶ Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*.

“**Behind the curtain,**” may have a connection to the classic film, story, *Wizard of Oz*; the green-suited shacky fellow operating “the show”, a fearful figure of a hologram with thunder and flames for emphasis, sending shivers to all but the dog. More, there is the Iron Curtain,⁴¹⁷ to signify the demarcation of communism, the imposed limitations to life and living, perhaps *the haves* from the *have nots*.

Considering the combination, both the film’s fearsome face and the figurative curtain, is that with *the veil* referred to prior, there is mystery to *the curtain*; that what you see (or more often are told) is not necessarily true, complete and concrete, but rather are concocted or contrived as social engineering of the state and its media prone to exaggeration, hype and hullabaloo, whether innocent or intentional, but still effective in *shaping the mind*, mindset.

There is today an unprecedented ability to use *the curtain*, to produce and propagate information, signs, and wonders to mislead, to foment fear and thus control large masses, at scale and scope never done prior. What will happen—what is happening—is nothing less than then totalitarianism, whether “inverted” as described previously, or not; still, the aims of the state are consolidated and centralized power, subordinating most of the remaining world *to its bidding*. From local to national government, these programs will involve pogroms; internal strife and subjugation, as one group is turned on another as a set-up for disempowering and demobilizing from *behind the curtain* by men small in character and wicked to the core.

⁴¹⁷ From Wikipedia, The **Iron Curtain** was a political boundary dividing Europe into two separate areas from the end of World War II in 1945 until the end of the Cold War in 1991. The term symbolizes the efforts by the Soviet Union (USSR) to block itself and its satellite states from open contact with the West and its allied states.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Up a blind alley,” somewhat as *painting yourself into a corner* or a dead end; a position without hope of progress or success, no apparent way out. Is it enough just to move through an unknown alley, especially at night, or is more when it has not outlet or egress except that behind, seemingly a dead-end?

While we are curling down in our comfort zone, the perverted talents of connectivity-designers drive us surreptitiously into a blind alley of addiction. If, however, we succeed in impeding mobiles' unlimited rule, we may be able to relish the fragrance of the 'moment' but also sense the vital spark and spirit of "otherness". ("Even if the world goes down, my mobile will save me"). ⁴¹⁸

And there is much on this, our attachment or addiction to/for mobile communications, social media and the other trappings that keep many glued to their cells, screens, networks, platforms, etc.

A smartphone is an addictive device which traps a soul into a lifeless planet full of lives...Smartphone is definitely smarter than us to be able to keep us addicted to it. ⁴¹⁹

Try to imagine a life—or even a day—without your cell phone at least within reach (why, the world would end as we know it). And this is a not just a device but a vice, an external organ conceived as necessary for life and living, as times do make it and as the state doth embrace it, use, and abuse it, as mobile communications is a means to an end, leveraging communications to control and finally corral the masses *up a blind alley* akin to the last leg of *the matrix*. ⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁸ Erik Pevernagie.

⁴¹⁹ Munia Khan.

⁴²⁰ Referring to the theme from *The Matrix*; those trapped in a simulate reality of machine control while a relative few aim to revolt, overthrow....

“Under no illusions, (or delusions)” to understand the reality or truth of a situation, nothing imaginary or fantastical (to the extent that one can distinguish the difference).

In the matrix is the depiction of a simulated world—without many are blind to or ignorant of their own enslavement, their bodily energy bled by/for machinery, while a relative few fight the good fight, insightful to the slavery, and in this later are at least fewer illusions or delusions regarding the dystopia. It seems finally to be a pill or drug that enables one or the other, blindness or insight with the risk either way.

Why seek insight, only knowledge of such, when it's action that seems necessary for change, preferably for the positive? One might take, exasperated or not, *the pill of blindness*, going about *the business* oblivious to the situation whether abject slavery on something similar—seemingly free of any reactions due those who refuse, casting their lot for insight, action. Either way, there are risks, known and unknown *under no illusions*, and in this divide are degrees of course, coarsely considered as the separation of *the zealot* from zombies, the latter as:

...not just fictional creatures that devour the flesh of the living. They also include those who follow the words of others without thinking for themselves. This world is falling apart. I don't think anyone can disagree with that. People live in their twenty-mile-radius realities and don't notice the world happening around them, until it finally breaks down their front door. ⁴²¹

With reality for those *unzombified*, more aware and awoke (in a meaningful meaning of the word, “woke” ⁴²²).

⁴²¹ Joseph McGinnis, *The Weathering, Dawn of the Apocalypse*.

⁴²² As another name for social Marxism with aims and ambitions to uplift designated “oppressed” via state intervention, law and such.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Until the cows come home,” to means for a long, long, time with no deviation in sight, as one might sat with or without *illusions* or *delusions* for as long as it remains so or until *cows come home*.

There is a deep desire to *hold the line*, to keep the status quo and some sense of control, surety and even safety. The *good ole days* are not necessarily *good* but in retrospect at least are *the past*, the elapsed time as some basis or base.

Then none was for a party,

Then all were for the state.

Then the great man helped the poor,

And the poor man loved the great.

Then lands were fairly portioned,

Then spoils were fairly sold.

The Romans were like brothers

In the brave days of old. ⁴²³

And unless you're not “like brothers”, the experience, memory as it is perceived, experienced, was likely not good or even acceptable; for what counts is which side you're on from *the zombies* to *the zealots*, from those that compromise everything to those that *hold the line*—or at least attempt to—often against great odds.

If *the cows do come home* and *the barn door has been left open*, who knows what may happen, for time always has way of changing things (and secondly, of revealing truth) and, at the pace or rate of change now, changing much in a radical and regretful way, *the cows to the meat market* and all the moos no more.

⁴²³ Thomas Babington Macaulay.

“Fox in the henhouse,” is another of the farm variety (e.g., *barn doors left open, fox in the henhouse, ducks in a pond, fish in barrel*); an idiom of age, the meaning as danger given contact between the predator and the prey—and especially when the predator be slick and quick. *Feathers will fly*, hens will disappear, for as long as the nocturnal predator gets its way, and the keeper fails to keep. But more the prevention,

Never let a friendly fox into your henhouse. One day he's going to get hungry. ⁴²⁴

To know who or what “the fox”; the poser, perceived at the least as harmless while in truth lethal to the core, perception as at least half the point.

One’s life experience presents many posers, pretenders, and imposters that can and do wheedle their way into humanity, coddling with or cozying up to those who may be the wiser but finding pleasure in the company, *deceiving, and being deceived*, ⁴²⁵ even exalting those who do such things well, better...best.

Civil courts intervene in matters of divorce, the division of “the assets” of the soon defunct family—not the least of which is the child or children of the two. Predisposed to “award” the child to one parent (the custodial) and remove same from the care of the other (noncustodial), the state is in effect paid through Title IV-D ⁴²⁶ to collect child support for children forcibly removed from their family.

⁴²⁴ Sidney Sheldon.

⁴²⁵ ***Deceiving and being deceived***, a phrase from the Scriptures, 2 Timothy 3:1-3, about *End Times*, it describes corruption that feeds on and of corruption, a cycle of ever-increasing wickedness and evil.

⁴²⁶ Systems and individual courts take advantage of federal funding under **Title IV-D** of the Social Security Act to obtain reimbursement for the costs of adjudicating child support and paternity matters.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Late unpleasantness,” is a term associated and assigned to the American Civil War; one derived by the southern states, perhaps best fulfilled in the developing deprivation during the war as well post-war reconstruction. Perhaps the phrase is gentil, a palatable way of describing *hard-times*, discrete but definite, to infer that somehow “this war” is survivable (even in/by secession).

We each have something or someone that produced an unpleasantness, an anxiety, anger, and finally fear.

Life is an unpleasant business. I have resolved to spend mine reflecting on it.⁴²⁷

To say that even the thought can render unpleasantness let alone treading through it, facing it courageously, running away in sheer terror, or contending with “this...” in the subtle or severe conditions reaped, realized, and remaining (lest we forget).

In parenting, one purposely attempts to keep the “unpleasantness” from their children, often; to shield from the *ugly world* and things they perhaps cannot understand, but weighing and measuring just what to tell him, her, them.

With the utmost love as our motivation, we sometimes think we are doing what is best for our children by protecting them from unpleasantness or cruelty. All we are really doing is shielding ourselves from owning up to misfortune or bad judgment.⁴²⁸

And while our nature is inclined on “shielding....bad judgement,” any comparison to institutions that claim to act in “the best interest of children” hardly stands; for one, institutions don’t love the children and two, they are paid, (their income as their primary motivation for interceding, exerting powers over/above parents, taking control).

⁴²⁷ Arthur Schopenhauer.

⁴²⁸ Debi Tolbert Duggar, *Riding Soul-O*.

“Up in arms,” as to protesting vigorously about/over something, persons have/can act on a right to petition, for/of free speech, and other Bill of Rights, supposedly, among other things.

But then the times we live, where censorship is evidently on the rise and more, the ever-expanding state power that wields arbitrary law and decides “judicially” who is an extremist, racist or even domestic terrorist. Sure, *witch hunts* happen, but unchecked political powers have not yet *gone postal*, where developing conditions cast more doubt or disgust on so-called justice; the exploiting powers of expedience to rid society of threats however deemed, criminals however derived, and prevailing fear however distributed to the public—framed as concern, conduct, conscience for the assurance of safety and security of *the commons*.

Though the concerned have more to consider; that while criminalization may not be their lot, still, there are risks if not issues in other ways imposing.

There is no worse tyranny than to force a man to pay for what he does not want merely because you think it would be good for him.⁴²⁹

And too, inflation as a “hidden tax,” in the cycle of economies, the debasing and debauchery of money, and the general trends of personal and public debt.

What is to become of “a man”, persons one and all, encumbered by the forces of finance that promote wealth in terms of the wealthy, that fail to consider the challenges of the most (let alone promotions of safety and security), and seem bent on a world of fiefdoms, the few who lead in lavishness, and the many who languish, laid low, down, and out?

⁴²⁹ Robert A. Heinlein, *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Through thick & thin,” or as said, “No matter what happens, I am with (behind) you (us),” an assurance, commitment, loyalty. Those that make such statements are apparently (or actually) devoted, trusting that their words are *their word*, with actions matching, true to form, complete.

There is all manner of possibilities beneath and beyond *thick & thin* from silent rejection to outright betrayal that happens (or happened), lending to lasting painful experience(s). How many adults have experienced rejection without remediation or resolution—left stupefied as to why, what or when it happens, happened? But then how many have had (or do have) a good or best friend; one that sticks, holds and otherwise is true to form, their words worthy; and to add,

When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives mean the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares.⁴³⁰

And this description is what each person needs, I believe; someone or somebody that can and will sympathize⁴³¹ in the general sense and, with similar experience, empathize^{432, 432}, to live out love.

⁴³⁰ Henri Nouwen, *Out of Solitude: Three Meditations on the Christian Life*.

⁴³¹ **Sympathize:** to incur feelings of pity and sorrow for someone else's misfortune,

⁴³² **Empathize;** the ability to understand other people's feelings as if we were having them ourselves.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“Trouble shared is...halved,” as simply to help *carry the load* of another burden, there reducing one’s trouble, problem, worry or more.

It is no secret that community or social strength is in decline across our country. From civic clubs and volunteerism to churches and other forms, community is perhaps at a low—which means that statism is at a high as *the dark-side* of societal order. ⁴³³

The State is that organization in society which attempts to maintain a monopoly of the use of force and violence in a given territorial area; in particular, it is the only organization in society that obtains its revenue not by voluntary contribution or payment for services rendered but by coercion. ⁴³⁴

Posing as paternalism, the state is more than capable of “giving” unparallel sums of money seemingly for society’s benefit, even need, while often using such outlays for the state and its accomplices. ⁴³⁵

I wonder how many such men in America would know that Communism, the New Deal, Fascism, Nazism, are merely so-many tradenames for collectivist Statism.... ⁴³⁶

A friend is a fine one to have in times of trouble, but the state is no friend at all, for it always acts in its best interest and takes no responsibility or fault for its actions.

⁴³³ Social health (strength) and statism are in opposition; the state seizing power from society either through physical or otherwise softer forms of force, such developments as war always swing the balance in favor of the state with society surrendering strength, succumbing to a crisis, an exploitation of powers as described by such persons as Murray Rothbard and Albert Nock.

⁴³⁴ Murray N. Rothbard, *Anatomy of the State*.

⁴³⁵ **The state and its accomplices** include any organizations, public or private, that represent the state, it’s interest and expansion.

⁴³⁶ Albert Nock.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Black swan...**,” is more a metaphor than an idiom; a term applied to an unpredictable or unforeseen event, typically one with extreme consequences, a so-called “watershed”.

Given what seems an endless series of stories on when and why the stock market will crash (or an economic collapse will occur, as in the cycle of such), is that both public and private debt is at an all-time high with growth unabated. One might say, “Sure, it’s going to happen but then, when...never mind why?”

If you hear a “prominent” economist using the word ‘equilibrium,’ or ‘normal distribution,’ do not argue with him; just ignore him or try to put a rat down his shirt.⁴³⁷

Not to make the matter simple or a single cause, but that, as is said so often, “They keep kicking the can down the road,” as to strengthen the effect, the longer the problem(s) deferred or delayed, the greater the effect analogous to a dam with a slow leak against the pressures behind it.

It seems that now, at this very moment, the stock market is booming, bullish, while much of the general economy is reeling from this last government “crisis” and the consequential public spending—most of which ends up supporting private interests, *the accomplices of the state*.⁴³⁸ Yet, there are the naysayers in some sense, that know the market is ripe for a major correction, such as Jeremy Grantham who holds that it is “overpriced.”

⁴³⁷ Nassim Nicholas Taleb, *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable*.

⁴³⁸ Described previously as any and all organizations, public or private, that represent the state, its interest and expansion; **accomplices** are expected to receive more government aid from the latest series of outlays—much as in 2008, “the mortgage crisis”—leading to the reality of corporate welfare and yet more socialistic conduct of democratic claim,

“...Or **business as usual**,” to continue from the previous page, and given “the signs”, at present, Jeremy Grantham expects the correction(s) to be severe, sudden as somewhat a *black swan* and, as I believe, many will lose (out) while—as always—a few *fat cats* will *win the day*, carrying *home the bacon* as the “insiders” have a habit of doing, knowing *when to hold and when to fold*.

In such effect(s), business will not be as usual for most persons. Inflation will reach unprecedented levels (as an economic law of the present spending and debt), and in the waning hours of the dollar, enter a digital currency to seemingly set us all straight—while in truth lending to yet more statism, more control of individual lives dependent ostensibly on a singular form of currency, all electronic, and perhaps panning the world over, a single world currency. ⁴³⁹

Of course, this transition will be baited with the usual benefits that serve as soft force, posing as protector for a safe and secure society, while in fact carving up the last vestiges of relative liberties, individual and community alike. Simply put, such centralization and concentration of power leaves no room for the conventions of (a) sovereignty and self-determination, no place for a person who holds to so-called individual rights to speak let alone to act! ⁴⁴⁰ What is coming will be far from *business as usual*; very far....

⁴³⁹ The create internal governance on such scale, the *powers* will need to unify the various currencies into a single form, type, whether it be as an actual currency or otherwise a permit to conduct commerce (a.k.a. a passport, license, or certification). One will not be able to buy or sell without the state’s authorization with terms and conditions of compliance, obedience, and subordination to that of the slave.

⁴⁴⁰ Much has been written and published on these conditions—though this does little to prepare many persons for the conditioning, the transition to such levels of statism, whereby one’s life and living is surveilled, controlled.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Take it on the chin...,” to mean that one endures or accepts misfortune courageously as opposed to cowardly, fear as it is.

To *take it on the chin* is to look an otherwise overpowering matter or figure *in the face* and to simply stand, not cower, to *take it* without necessarily *giving it back*, (and to resist letting it *eat your insides out* or destroy you beyond the blows, the bruises, and the scars however the feeling, numbness or otherwise visible or not). Adding to this reaction or response, one might say, “Keep your chin up,” as an offshoot of this idiom, an encouragement of sort to not *let it get to you* or *get the best of you* or *take you down*.

How difficult it is to *take it on the chin*, when you don’t know where or when it comes, the uncertainty that at best leaves us each guessing in *the shadows* or trying to move in *a house of mirrors*, amid the smoke and fog of deception, deliberate or not. How can you plan or prepare for *the next blow when the air is so still*, no warning sounds to hear, even the possibility of some *calm before the storm*?

Suffice to say that suffering is key to preparing; that having *fought a good fight* is assurance to endure it again, and again, body and soul figurately buffeted from the blows, past and present, hardened, and hard, a courage and conditioning that spawn and stay *scars* to remind or teach us each that it happened and by some miracle(s), each overcame, overcomes.

Learning comes from books [but] penetration of a mystery from suffering.⁴⁴¹

And though the *life of Christ* is unique, supernatural, yet physically and in other forms of suffering, conditioning, else that *mystery* be unknown to him, the blows before us, a *chin* made of courage.

⁴⁴¹ Fulton J. Sheen, *Life of Christ*.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“...**Or knocked for a loop**,” which can just as well happen (or has happened), but it is *the heavy blows* that leave *the scars* to remind us of then, now, and possibly awaits, *the mystery* in some revelation(s).

If one has been *knocked for a loop* by the state, an experience of lasting *scars*, then they know who or what the state really is and is not; that no matter what the state claims, it always acts in its best interest—which is frequently against the individual, his family, the community, and society, that which fosters social strength.

One should not have to look any further than the so-called justice system, the conditions of courts, to realize *how far we have come*.

American justice is a joke. It does not exist. You can see this in the American prison population. “Freedom and Democracy” America not only has the largest percentage of its population in prison than any country on the planet, but also the largest number of prisoners. If you consider that “authoritarian” China has four times the population of the United States but fewer prisoners, you understand that “authoritarian” China has a more protective rule of law than the United States. Compared to “freedom and democracy America,” Russia has hardly anyone in prison. Yet, Washington and its media whores have defined the President of Russia as “the new Hitler.”⁴⁴²

And as to how or when the courts began to create the world’s largest prison system is clearly tied to the so-called “war on drugs”; that is, *the war* on the decided “illegal” variety—not the products of Big Pharma that *knock children for a loop*, the masses prescribed with psychotropics, and have made billions at the expense of young minds, families, communities, and societal strength. No, not those for whom a windfall of dividends awaits—never mind any so called “conflicts of interest”, corruption and violations on criminal scale.

⁴⁴² Paul Craig Roberts, “The Rule of Law No Longer Exists in Western Civilization, Global Research” (6 January 2016).

Pondering on points of POWER

“That’s the way...,” is sometimes followed by “the cookie crumbles,” to mean that life and living sometimes demands the acceptance of things as is—or as it seems to be—without recourse.

A once well-known anchor was renown (and thus expected) to say, “And that’s the way it is,” at the conclusion of each evening television news. ⁴⁴³ Highly respected as he was (is), lauded as the most trusted man in American news’ broadcasting—which is saying something given his profession—still he admitted,

In all my years as a news commentator I was never once able to tell the truth about anything.

And if that was not bad enough, look how far we have come as with the “whores” or what Gerald Celente ⁴⁴⁴ calls, “press-ti-tutes,” the publishers and promoters of lies upon lies to deceive and distract the minds of millions while the state does its *dirty work* as written by Paul Craig Roberts.

Don’t you think something is fishy when the presstitutes orchestrate a fake news “humanitarian crisis” in Venezuela, but totally ignore the real humanitarian crises in Yemen and Gaza? Don’t you think it is a bit much for Washington to steal \$21 billion of Venezuela’s money, impose sanctions in an effort to destabilize the country and to drive the Venezuelan government to its knees, blame Venezuelan socialism (essentially nationalization of the oil company) for bringing “starvation to the people”....

⁴⁴³ From Wikipedia, **Walter Cronkite**, (1916 – 2009) was an American broadcast journalist who served as anchorman for the CBS Evening News] for 19 years (1962–1981).

⁴⁴⁴ From Wikipedia, **Gerald Celente** is an American trend forecaster publisher of the Trends Journal, business consultant and author who makes predictions about the global financial markets and other important events.

“The cookie crumbles,” to return to the idiom of the previous page, the often applied second half of *that’s the way* (though cookies are not the only thing that crumbles, of course).

There are those who know that our country is crumbling, public and private debt as one indicator of that decline; the problems pervasive, unprecedented, untenable, unresolvable, or irreconcilable to the degree that when this country collapses—as an inevitable and intended end—it will take much of the world with it. ⁴⁴⁵

Our nation has been hijacked by oligarchs, corporations, and a narrow, selfish, political, and economic elite, a small and privileged group that governs, and often steals, on behalf of moneyed interests. This elite, in the name of patriotism and democracy, in the name of all the values that were once part of the American system and defined the Protestant work ethic, has systematically destroyed our manufacturing sector, looted the treasury, corrupted our democracy, and trashed the financial system. During this plundering we remained passive, mesmerized by the enticing shadows on the wall, assured our tickets to success, prosperity, and happiness were waiting around the corner. ⁴⁴⁶

And again, a development in the making, the aims to centralize/consolidate governance at an international level, largely driven by “crisis” on such proportion(s) that demand such intervention, oversight and ultimately, central governance, tyrannical and totalitarian. ⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁵ Chris Hedges speaks of the effects similarly in *Empire of Illusions, America, the Farewell Tour*; a collapse with international scope and scale given the dollar as the reserve currency, “Petro-dollar”.

⁴⁴⁶ Chris Hedges, *Empire of Illusion: The End of Literacy and the Triumph of Spectacle*.

⁴⁴⁷ Crisis as an opportunity include a combination of environmental, energy, economic, health and welfare, commerce, and communications.

Pondering on points of POWER

"Is it tear-jerking," to consider the previous page content, the condition of our country as is, but *the way the cookie crumbles?* The reaction(s) to such depends of course on what one believes, accepts, and understands on some level, from those who are indifferent, un-informed or ill-informed and those grieved, remorseful. You can only *kick the can down the road* for so long if, to begin, you understand that there is *a can* and that it's been kicked *till the cows come home*.

If/as Scripture is true to form, the prophets of old and the foretelling of *The End Times* in the post-ascension and new covenant, then such expectation of a new world order is *nothing new under the sun*, preceded by much undoing of the humanity, depravity on a scale *just in the days of Noah*.⁴⁴⁸ And while the timing of events and epochs is open to debate, the earth seems ripe for a world order given the advent of the internet, the integration of resources as never before, a domain ready for domination through destruction of the present hierarchy of powers' structures and sovereignty.

I believe that, owing to men's folly, a world-government will only be established by force, and will therefore be at first cruel and despotic. But I believe that it is necessary for the preservation of a scientific civilization, and that, if once realized, it will gradually give rise to the other conditions of a tolerable existence.⁴⁴⁹

Thus, the cause(s) for a series of ever increasing, intensifying forces that will drive us to submission stained by another trail of tears.

⁴⁴⁸ Scriptures foretell of the Earth's empires, the demise as well as the decline of humanity similar to the days of Noah, depraved and deceitful in all ways, that finally ends of with Christ's return and reign eternal, *a new heaven, and a new earth*.

⁴⁴⁹ Bertrand Russell.

“Cry me a river,” or where the tears are a torrent, usually expressed satirically, “Poor, poor pitiful you,” or something like that.

Aside from the title of a few songs beginning in the 1950s, this idiom does seem to apply to much else in a search; still, it has two sides:

- Sad or upset and the one unsympathetic, even downright cruel, a mockery of the other’s feelings, emotions, with possible long terms or lasting effects on both sides.
- Sympathy, possibly empathy; one and the other as reactions rooted in compassion perhaps placed by “the other” experiencing something similar.

As not said better, the best of humanity, “compassion is the basis of (for) morality.” ⁴⁵⁰ And conversely, immorality is without compassion, cruel and calloused, the worst of what humanity is, was and will be for as long as corruption remains here on Earth.

Where the world is going is seemingly unknown to events but what is believed with good reason is that times come (again) where sympathy and empathy is less—the whole sense of it considered weakness as well as waste, *the love of many will grow cold* ⁴⁵¹.

With the advent of visual media, violent images and other content presented in endless ways, a desensitizing or conditioning occurs. ⁴⁵² When extended to society or culture, what is left for the concerned but to grieve and fear, no tears left to *cry me a river*.

⁴⁵⁰ Arthur Schopenhauer.

⁴⁵¹ Matthew 24:12.

⁴⁵² Early research on the effects of viewing violence on television — especially among children — found a desensitizing effect and the potential for aggression,
<https://www.apa.org/action/resources/research-in-action/protect>.

“The last thing I want,” is often used for emphasis than earnestness; for example, “The last thing I want to do is hurt you.” But in this example, the truth may be that the one speaking may indeed mean to hurt the other, intent on not only damage but also deceit—and “anything is better than lies and deceit.” ⁴⁵³

The history of deceit according to the Scriptures begins in the Garden of Eden; Eve is deceived by the serpent and subsequently, Adam attempts to conceal the ordeal from God however feeble the attempt. From that *original sin*, comes a history of lies and deceit, compounded many times over, each and all of which are again feeble attempts aimed for some advantage in the trust and faith that all things are known by God.

If a lie is bad enough—to consider my own—deceit is acceptably *taking it to the next level*, often arranged or orchestrated in advance—not just lies but cheating and possibly stealing.... And to consider other accounts of scriptures, one need go further the Acts where, as it seems, powers are conspiring, inciting violence, making false claims, and all manner of such deceit chapter after chapter; each and all aimed to *take-out* some disciple(s), the Way. ⁴⁵⁴ Still,

The greatest fool is not the person who has been fooled by the lies of others, despite how crafty and ingenious those lies might have been. Rather, it is the fool who has lied with such amazing dexterity and subtle finesse that he himself has come to believe his own lies. And this is the most forlorn and yet the most dangerous person that I can imagine. ⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵³ From Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*.

⁴⁵⁴ **The Way**, as the earliest followers of Christ were called. Acts includes one encounter/account after another of Sanhedrin and similar schemes aimed to end this movement, imprisoning, and executing along the Way.

⁴⁵⁵ Craig D. Lounsbrough.

problems, pains, and pleasures

"Is a circus," or "it's a circus," as intended to be the last half of *the last thing I want*. Oh, and if it's "a circus", then like an actual circus, it is intense with too much to *take-in* at once.

One look no further then the media's part in propaganda that have an uncanny habit of *pumping* a story or topic from all points, a veritable blitz.

But what is propaganda, if not the effort to alter *the picture...*, to substitute one social pattern for another? ⁴⁵⁶

And it doesn't stop there, this *pumping* of the public mind via a single-pointed but from all-points programming, while controls are put in place to censor or block alternative points.

Without some form of censorship, propaganda in the strict sense of the word is impossible. In order to conduct propaganda, there must be some barrier between the public and the event. Access to *the real environment* must be limited before anyone can create a *pseudo-environment* that he thinks wise or desirable.

As to *a circus*, both censorship and collusion provide the *dual effect*; programming, *deceiving*, through words with suppression or discounting of conflicting information or "conspiracy theory", followed by deeds, *the dirty work*, as the third of 3-rings.

Such propaganda always begins with words, but soon it proceeds to deeds. When there are no facts to support lies, facts must be made [as the end justifies the means]. ⁴⁵⁷

And with all that can or should be said (and perhaps will...) "propaganda is the executive arm of the invisible government," ⁴⁵⁸ and not the result of plain reason or common sense.

⁴⁵⁶ Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion*.

⁴⁵⁷ Eric Ambler, *The Mask of Dimitrios*.

⁴⁵⁸ Edward Bernays, "The Father of Propaganda".

Pondering on points of POWER

“The pen is mightier...,” to mean that words can be powerful when, from the previous page, suppression is lifted, and the right of free speech is respected—rather than abrogated and abolished via the state and its *ministry of information*. Indeed, “free speech” is not acceptable in a heavily propagandized society as here, now, and with increasing intensity. What is practiced with the *protected pen*, approved, and applied by the politic simply means that everything and anything else is not..., thus the discounting or devaluing of other opinions-sources as mere conspiracy or the altogether shutting down, de-platforming or even criminalization of such sources in keeping with our history. ⁴⁵⁹

Restriction of free thought and free speech is the most dangerous of all subversions. It is the one un-American act that could most easily defeat us. ⁴⁶⁰

But such suppression-subversion is here, enabled farther and further in the age of rapid and rapacious measures of control, the concentration-centralization of powers (as combinations and complexities inconceivable in comparison to any known history).

What is to come, coming—and already here—is a technocracy; and though a meager population, it possesses unassailable, limitless power made so through advances of science and the exploitation of humanity, the end of which is rid the world of any individual thought, action, life and living, save that approved and accessed by the state, self-elevated, exalted to a godhead, with *the mightiest of pens*—so they think.

⁴⁵⁹ In the Civil War for example, Lincoln initiated-executed orders to incriminate-incarcerate newspapers, owners, and staff, decidedly as “enemies of the state”—turning the First Amendment *on its head*.

⁴⁶⁰ William O. Douglas.

“...**Then the sword,**” or simply that words trump action(s), information over aggression and, for the state, forms of soft force such as seduction, suppression, and subversion.

As in an alleged “free” society, the use of soft force(s) is simply the way according to Edward Bernays and his own flock; those that stand to profit with/from power, the masters of manipulation, with a full array of sources coordinated and concentrated, controlling the narrative followed fabrications to *bring home that point*.

Continuous interpretation is achieved by trying to control every approach to the public mind in such a manner that the public receives the desired impression, often without being conscious of it.

And regarding war as both a method and means of increased state power,

Here was an extraordinary state accomplishment: mass enthusiasm at the prospect of a global brawl that otherwise would mystify those very masses, and that shattered most of those who actually took part in it. The Anglo-American drive to demonize “the Hun,” and to cast the war as a transcendent clash between Atlantic “civilization” and Prussian “barbarism,” made so powerful an impression on so many that the worlds of government and business were forever changed.

Still more,

Universal literacy was supposed to educate the common man to control his environment. Once he could read and write he would have a mind fit to rule. So ran the democratic doctrine. But instead of a mind, universal literacy has given him rubber stamps, rubber stamps inked with advertising slogans, with editorials, with published scientific data, with the trivialities of the tabloids and the platitudes of history, but quite innocent of original thought.

Yes, the pen (or words) is more powerful....

Pondering on points of POWER

“There’s no such thing...,” is one that is often applied on the front end, the back half as perhaps as countless possibilities but most often sometime something inexplicable, inconceivable. It goes without saying that age presents opportunities and possibilities to change whether by experience(s) and/or altering point(s) of view. One can disbelieve in UFOs and aliens on the premise that they’ve never seen either—so they accept—only to later reconsider given some “viewing” or other less personable evidence or reasons.

As this is written, rumor has it that the state will soon be disclosing information on extraterrestrials, more evidence of one sort or another collected, evidently confidential until now and yet—for some reason—is ready to *let the lid off* or *let it fly* or *pull the mask off*, perhaps “for the best interest of the public”.

Wise leaders know that serving the best interests of all will lead to a healthy and prosperous society. That's why they work to bring people together, not tear them apart, to serve the common good.⁴⁶¹

And perhaps in the best of possibilities the above is indeed the reason; still, one should also consider that:

1. Leaders are not always wise and, in the worst case, are not only foolish but are fierce at serving themselves (and a relative few of enormous power, position and promise).
2. Political leaders are prone to corruption but are fierce to avoid culpability or complicity thus promoting more crimes.
3. Political leader or politics is renown for exploiting a crisis, often manufacturing the consequences to include fear as a basis for control and the seizure of yet more power.

⁴⁶¹ Laurence Overmire, *The One Idea That Saves The World: A Message of Hope in a Time of Crisis*.

problems, pains, and pleasures

"...**As a free lunch**," is best recalled from my first economics course in college; the realization that what we have must be earned, persons laboring or earning their property, possession.

But is it true, *that there's no such thing as a free lunch*? For persons, yes, as even so-called "government handouts" are not without uncertain terms, *strings attached*, of one form or another. What is more, the *handouts* cannot be gifts from the government given that the government does not earn money but instead demands revenue through taxes of one form or another, borrows or sells treasuries to the Federal Reserve that in effect put the nation in hock. Still, one cannot deny that *money is money* and thus, from one program to another, the government is able to *produce* beyond comprehension let alone the actual effect or consequences.

Handouts are like *trojan horses* that seem nice at first, only to learn later of their fraudulence and how much damage and turmoil and suffering they cause.⁴⁶²

To emphasize (again), a *free lunch* is not free for you or me, and indeed can cause more problems than solutions, more despair than opportunity in contrast with or counter to compassion.

Compassion, however, should mean providing a mechanism to escape poverty rather than simply maintaining people in an impoverished state by supplying handouts. By doing this we give them an opportunity to elevate their personal situations, which eventually decreases our need to take care of them and empowers them to be able to exercise compassion toward others.⁴⁶³

⁴⁶² Hendrith Vanlon Smith Jr, *The Wealth Reference Guide: An American Classic*.

⁴⁶³ Ben Carson, *One Nation: What We Can All Do to Save America's Future*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Two wrongs don’t...,” is almost if not always followed by “make a right,” as opposed to two negatives making a positive, so the math goes. But then the question of what is a “wrong” or “wrongs” anyway, given that right and wrong is sometimes a point of view or perspective, and opinion, subjective or relative. Still,

Two wrongs don't make a right, but they make a good excuse.⁴⁶⁴

And if one or another has enough power, what’s the need for, or point of, an excuse anyway? Excuses are for those who apparently appeal for some consideration, even clemency, of one sort or another, and not those that are not only excused by might very well deny the whole thing—or worse, pin it on someone else, even you! But,

Don't you dare take the lazy way. It's too easy to excuse yourself because of your ancestry. Don't let me catch you doing it! Now -- look close at me so you will remember. Whatever you do, it will be you who do.⁴⁶⁵

And to suggest the state can or should make excuses is similarly beyond reason; to do this..., and pull-it-off, it must be believable beyond reparations, damages long rendered. And still to consider is that the state is “the law” by (or for) which

There...[are] orders, instructions, duties, commands—and finally the many-headed monster, morale, necessity, hard reality, responsibility, or whatever it was called— there was always a screen behind which to evade the simple law of humanity.⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶⁴ Thomas Szasz.

⁴⁶⁵ John Steinbeck, *East of Eden*.

⁴⁶⁶ Erich Maria Remarque, *Arch of Triumph: A Novel of a Man Without a Country*.

“...**Make a right**,” as the likely back end of *two wrongs...*, but with a slight adjustment, might be *making it right* or doing the *right thing*—though once again *digging deeper* on notions of what is right, when, and where right exist and possibly prevails.

There are many routes to take, seeking and finding *right* however many right turns are made—or left turns for that matter—of which the destination or origin rests in the absolutes of humanity whether as law or by plain reason, the best of humanity under the guidance and Lordship of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the scriptures.

But there is our personal and public behavior, of what is described as “doing the things that we know we shouldn’t do,” laying down the moral dilemma and chief tenant of Christianity: that we each are sinners, born into corruption, and thus in need of salvation made possibly only through Christ, a life made righteous, our righteousness.

In all the above and beyond, is still the matter of what is right, the answer(s) remaining subjective and abstract at times. And if such is not challenging enough for one, add to this the influence and pressures of groups and institutions, all variety of forces from the soft and subliminal to the visceral and then violent, law or not.

Drawing from another film, *The Winslow Boy* ⁴⁶⁷, a central character playing a lawyer makes the remark, “It is easy to do justice but difficult to do right,” distinguishing the two as not only different but *miles apart*, *justice* as merely a word, *right* as so much more.

⁴⁶⁷ From Wikipedia, *The Winslow Boy* is a 1999 period drama film directed by David Mamet.... It depicts a family defending the honor of its young son at all costs. The screenplay was adapted by Mamet based on Terence Rattigan's 1946 dramatic play *The Winslow Boy*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Twist of fate,” is an occurrence or event of chance that is interesting, possibly strange, or bizarre, and unfortunate. Of the first of several quotes is John Perkins ⁴⁶⁸.

I have come to understand that life is composed of a series of coincidences. How we react to these—how we exercise what some refer to as free will—is everything; the choices we make within the boundaries of the twists of fate determine who we are.

And this from one who spent more than a decade assigning U.S. intelligence agencies and multi-nationals in business dealings involving other nations. From this experience, he explains,

Basically, what “economic hit men” are trained to do is to build up the American empire. To create situations [in which] as many resources as possible flow into this country, to our corporations, and our government, and in fact we’ve been very successful.

To add that any *twist of fate* as first described, may involve more than chance; indeed, *by hook or crook, heads would roll and the long arm and heavy hand* dropped undiplomatically and indubitably upon the next *pawn on the chessboard* with loans—bribes in effect—for “When men and women are rewarded for greed, greed becomes a corrupting motivator.” Still, as perhaps planned anyway,

...the loans are so large that the debtor is forced to default on its payments after a few years. When this happens, then like the Mafia we demand *our pound of flesh*.

More control and conquest of the nation’s wealth.

⁴⁶⁸ From Wikipedia, **John Perkins** an American author. His best-known book is *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man* (2004), in which Perkins claims to have played a role in an alleged process of economic colonization of Third World countries on behalf of what he portrays as a cabal of corporations, banks, and the United States government.

“Act of God,” as affiliated to property insurance, the occurrence or event (a claim) presumably more a *twist of fate*, something on scale with God’s work, plan or will—though more to simply mean that “things happen”, the weather and all else as adversely affecting our existence in our present, bodily form(s).

She could stand to think that life’s experiences, good and bad, died with the body, but she couldn’t bear to believe that the dreams vanished too, those exquisite flights of reverie that never actually happened. All those experiences you can have for free. How could they burn and turn to ash? She would disappear one day, too, both her flesh and the woman she dreamed herself to be.⁴⁶⁹

And as much as we humanly try to avoid or confront our mortality, this life as we know it, the reality is waiting for us to *come to grips*, to *face the music*, and to accept that our bodies give-out one way or another, depending on *the known* and *the unknown*.

But as to the afterlife, what is to come beyond the present, is something that is sometimes scary; light rather than darkness, which we desire or determine versus that which is or will be, reality once again, *the known* more *known* if our conscious allows.

Does God exist and is Christ the living savior who has *gone to prepare a place for all who believe, for those who receive the gift of eternal life*⁴⁷⁰? Are the scriptures true to form and finality; that *there is none righteous, no not even one*⁴⁷¹, and thus, each person who is desperate for life, disparate of righteousness, is dependent on that faith that says, “I believe”, and then proceeds to do so as an *act of God*, not just a *hearer but a doer as well*.

⁴⁶⁹ Jill Ciment, *Act of God*.

⁴⁷⁰ From Romans 6:23.

⁴⁷¹ From Romans 3:10.

Pondering on points of POWER

"The bigger they are..." harkens back to childhood; the notion that some "bully" is beatable, their size, strength, or power is/as their downfall—so the notion goes.

Empires rise and fall, their life or length quite predicable given the passage of time from the ancient world to modern times, a primary truth than the centralization or concentration of power is its own worst enemy, the inevitable downfall as self-annihilation.

It was an article of faith to the Romans that they were the most morally upright people in the world. How else was the size of their empire to be explained? Yet they also knew that the Republic's greatness carried its own risks. To abuse it would be to court divine anger. Hence the Roman's concern to refute all charges of bullying, and to insist they had won their empire purely in self-defense.⁴⁷²

And there lies the denying bully who/that by declaration or decree, plays the part of honor and dignity while in fact conducts conquest, region after region, resource after resource, the property and possession for the taking—though in their defense, of course.

In response to my question about how we might rein in the empire, he said, "That's why I'm meeting with you. Only you in the United States can change it. Your government created this problem, and your people must solve it. You've got to insist that Washington honor its commitment to democracy, even when democratically elected leaders nationalize your corrupting corporations. You must take control of your corporations and your government. The people of the United States have a great deal of power. You need to come to grips with this. There's no alternative."⁴⁷³

⁴⁷² Tom Holland, *Rubicon: The Last Years of the Roman Republic*.

⁴⁷³ John Perkins, *The Secret History of the American Empire: Economic Hit Men, Jackals & the Truth about Global Corruption*.

“...**The harder they fall**,” as another of the likely back-halves; that *the bigger they are, the harder they fall*.

Who am I to argue that this idiom is less than universal or timeless? One who can remember the exception(s) vividly, the bully who blew the competition away and *totally-dominated the field*. But as time does tell, it holds—it really holds—for *the heavy weight*, their hard fall with all the fanfare that follows “the little guy”, the underdog, or the *Cinderella story*.

In yet another film of similar title, theme and plot, the lean years of boxing heavy weight champion James Braddock comes to life.⁴⁷⁴

I believe we live in a great country, a country that's great enough to help a man financially when he's in trouble. But lately, I've had some good fortune, and I'm back in the black. And I just thought I should return it.

And is profound, even proud, as the scene when James returns to the welfare line with cash in hand, giving back what they were given in a time of need, as a reflection of his character, gratitude.

Though formally a “light-weight”, James has what seems a last chance to prove his worth, *a shot* at the heavyweight championship held by Max Baer; and though the two are quite close in weight/size, the film takes some liberty in sizing Baer to be considerably larger, callously lethal in the ring, rude and crude, and insulting to both Braddock and his wife, making it easy to want for Braddock to beat the holy \$@*% out of this *Neanderthal*.

As an afterword, though, Baer was a *good egg*, a real gregarious guy—far from that depicted in the film.

⁴⁷⁴ From Wikipedia, *Cinderella Man* is a 2005 American biographical sports drama film directed by Ron Howard, titled after the nickname of world heavyweight boxing champion James J. Braddock, and inspired by his life story.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Last straw**,” to say, “This is it,” or “This is your last chance,” whether a *twist of fate*, and *act of God*, or any other occurrence or event to follow, but in its milder form one (more) difficulty or annoyance, typically minor but coming on top of a whole series of difficulties, that makes a situation unbearable.

In his book by the same, Jeff Kinney ⁴⁷⁵ writes,

I didn't really know what to expect from detention but when I waked into the room, the first thought I had was, I don't belong in here with these future criminals.

But one generally does not know when they may be apprehended or summoned before some authorities whether the principal or judges' office, civil or criminal court, detention, jail, or prison, the executionary of some part of our life, our living. One may sincerely wonder, as the so-called “wimpy kid”, why they're in the company of presumably bad fellows, their own innocence or not.

That made Dad pretty mad, so he said,

“NO SON OF MINE IS A QUITTER!”

Which isn't really true at all. I'm a HUGE quitter....

But in a *tight spot* or seemingly facing your *last straw*, help and hope is more to happen when or if there is someone there to encourage you, to reassure you and with all due respect, to respect you as much as one can and perhaps should undergirded with the power of love, devotion, commitment.

⁴⁷⁵ **Jeff Kinney** is author of the series, *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid* which, from his website, is a fixture on the USA Today, Wall Street Journal, and Publishers Weekly bestseller lists. The series has remained on the New York Times bestseller lists since the publication of the first book, for more than 500 weeks total, and more than 350 on the series list. The books are currently available in 76 editions in 64 languages.

“Third time’s the charm,” is one for the potentially desperate; that try, try again, one’s chance will come, a range of “opportunities”. Often this phrase applied as a quip about multiple marriages, the *third time* is somehow more probable or certain, once more *throwing the dice* on marriage as though, given enough chances, it may stick—but then all one can finally do is believe until the outcome, the result, and with marriage, never give up!

You ever hear the saying “The third time’s the charm”? It isn’t. It’s just a way of saying that you’ve tried something twice and failed and you’re too stubborn or stupid to quit and move on. ⁴⁷⁶

But then the “well-wishers” that wryly say something like, “Sure, third time...,” as to similarly remark “Why not,” or “What the Hell,” or something similar.

There is a sense, perhaps subtle, of desperation that hovers over us, I think; one where folks seek and search for, in the purpose and place in a rapidly changing world—one subdued by technology and its politic, technocracy, lending to doubt if not dismissal that *the more things change, the more they stay the same*.

My mission doesn’t matter anymore. Patriotism drives my work ethic. Love drives my soul.

Can one trust their family, their neighbors or community, and then the state, believing that all-in-all, that it is good, well-intended, genuinely so? Well, maybe not all “it” but at least something sensitive and sincere must *be there*, relied on and kept close, as our life and living hinges on socialization whether from the first to the last..., never mind the notion that the *third time’s the charm* or that any ‘ism ⁴⁷⁷ cares the least about you, me, or us.

⁴⁷⁶ Ernest Stone; Ruth Ford Elward, *Third Time’s A Charm*.

⁴⁷⁷ Can any ‘ism such (patriotism, socialism or capitalism) mean well.

Pondering on points of POWER

“It’s a toss-up,” to mean it can go either way, that the decision is not yet final, the matter closed, the outcome assured. One might at such times, in the give & take, decide to *throw in the towel* or *turn their back* on a lifestyle, job or even career, choosing what they might perceived as *the road less traveled*, considering such as a conviction, even an act of courage.

It’s a toss-up when you decide to leave the beaten track. Many are called, few are chosen.⁴⁷⁸

The more *the track beaten*, perhaps the less willing or able to leave, to *climb out of the rut*, *the mud and figurative blood* (shed) with all the sweat and tears, the love and the fears, commitments and conditions, terms, and terminations. One dreams to simply leave, depart or move-on without *strings attached*, *loose-ends* or languishing likes and loves. Still, and often as so,

There’s a much deeper and meaningful conversation being conducted in the space between the lines.

Not what is necessarily said or spoken but considered, perhaps applied to or in....

“After all, who really knows what tomorrow brings,” so said Chuck Noland, played by Tom Hanks in the film *Castaway*.⁴⁷⁹ And while one may plan for this or that, for then or beyond then, there remains that mystery *between the lines*, of what we think and do.

⁴⁷⁸ W. Somerset Maugham, *The Razor’s Edge*.

⁴⁷⁹ From Wikipedia, ***Castaway*** is a 2000 American survival drama film directed and produced by Robert Zemeckis and starring Tom Hanks, Helen Hunt, and Nick Searcy. Hanks plays a FedEx troubleshooter stranded on an uninhabited island after his plane crashes in the South Pacific, and the plot focuses on his desperate attempts to survive and return home.

“Over before it started,” as that which is clearly not *a toss-up* but is at least deemed or determined as final and altogether finished... before it began so to speak. One (side) might declare, “It’s in the bag,” to suggest that whatever is possible is, in the expression, ready for the taking, or for the other, a resignation, possibly regret that they *did not see it coming*, possibly ill-prepared and then, most accentuated, an impetuous fool (for believing they had a chance).

The obvious basis for striving, succeeding or something similar, given a challenging situation is:

- Information, having an understanding on some level
- Reason, to consider options, a response, a plan
- Action, as to executing *the plan*, preferably having done a *dry-run*, rehearsal/exercise, or something as to the experience

How far does one have to go to *see it coming* in some degree, to have any understanding as to *what they’re up against*, what changes will come?

Times are a-changing, and reality is changing; an international consolidation of power—the likes of which the world has never known on record, the conditions and consequences in/of the centralization and concentration of power, the levels of corruption and cruelty as never encumbered *this side of heaven*. How can this happen, be allowed, except by an existential threat of epic proportions, international and beyond?

...the best way to unite all the nations on this globe would be an attack from some other planet. In the face of such an alien enemy, people would respond with a sense of their unity of interest and purpose.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁸⁰ John Dewey Speech 1917.

Pondering on points of POWER

“The course of true love,” on a far, far different bend is, in its true form; love is not over—not ever—staying the course for as long as our heart is enabled, whatever the cost, whenever the *times*, and whomever..., until *the bitter end*.

What differentiates the individual from institutions is love, it's power; that while anyone has the potential to love, as endowed, the institution is loveless, left to its devices and vices that, taken as a whole, are not love, loving or lovable—but are without love.

One may comment, such as a self-proclaimed patriot, “I love my country,” as seemingly a statement that stands on its own merit or otherwise requires no reason(s), service, etc.

Still, one may be convinced that he should love his country or some other institution, to give his all whatever the reason, whenever *the times*, and whomever..., no place for *the bitter end*. Coerced or compelled to obey and submit to his country, the state, the love lost or no longer a condition, a basis, but rather forced—which is *the bread and butter* of the state—to *do his duty*.

But love is, now more than ever, lessened; it is generally diluted, devalued, and dismissed as an “emotional condition” according to David R. Hawkins ⁴⁸¹.

When frustrated, this [supposed love] reveals an underlying anger and dependency.

Bringing forth real love, loving, sacrifice and suffering; that is:

Loving is...a forgiving, nurturing, and supportive way or relating to the world. [] It has the capacity to lift others and accomplish great feats because of its purity of motive.

And love keeps no record of wrongs, as the Scriptures tell us.

⁴⁸¹ *Power vs Force, The Hidden Determinants of Human Behavior*, 2002.

“...**Never did run smooth**,” as a metaphor to/from machinery, its operation; or the opposite of a *smooth-running machine*, things that *hum along*, steady, sustained, ready, reliable, and all that goes into anything that “delivers” or deploys without significant exception or error.

That which *never did run smooth* presents a range of conditions from the dilapidated and distressed to that as *not quit there*, a *bug* or a glitch that can or does pose a risk if not an issue, problem(s), failure, a method, or mission aborted, perhaps.

Yet, there is a *well-oiled machine*, but then something happens, goes wrong, and the whole thing disintegrates, a catastrophic or irreparable event, a *full stop*. Or the potential..., a symptom or sign that *thing don't look so good*, failure is *just a matter of time* such as with crack propagation, the slow leak that finally *gives way*.

Our nation carries more debt than any known of world history; a problem of epic proportion but more, a phenomenon, profound, posed as a question, “How do they do it, keep running up untenable debt?” Yet with all that one may wonder, it will end, the accrual of debt, and it will not end well, whether the problem(s) result in steady decline or on the other end, collapse. When/as it happens, the effect(s) will be transmitted world-wide, a storm beyond the century, with a relative few surviving, save the highest echelons of economy. Looking back to *Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith, and the contemporary work of Noam Chomsky ⁴⁸², the “vile maxim of the masters of mankind” is *taking its toll* on personal and public health—wealth controlled and continuing to shift to a few while the ranks or numbers of servitude grow—for those that survive *the machine*, for those that *hand-on* and somehow *ride it out*.

⁴⁸² Expressed on understood from *Requiem for the American Dream*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Those 3 little words,” returning to love, its power proven over the course of time, manifest in and among any who have a heart by natural and supernatural means—not to be confused with the abuse(s) of love, using this powerful word for nefarious reason (as described several pages back, pertaining to evil that emanates from *the love of money*)⁴⁸³.

Is it love or lust, for as I see it, “real love” and money are not marriageable, the want for more and more..., the things that money buys (or as that *vile maxim of the masters of mankind* thieves and seizes *by hook or crook*)? As love is about giving, even unconditionally, in its true forms, *the love of money* is greed, graft, an insatiable appetite that stops at nothing or no one to achieve an endless end. And applied to *those 3 little words*, “I love you (money)”, is *the root of all evil* in that it grows all the worst we can possibly be, our lives consumed with/by unlimited and undaunted want, our minds and hearts mastered to do *whatever it takes*!

But here comes the rub: all of us feel that we are in complete control of our desire for things. We would never admit to an ungovernable spirit of covetousness. The problem is that we, like the alcoholic, are unable to recognize the disease once we have been engulfed by it. Only by the help of others are we able to detect the inner spirit that places wealth about God. And we must come to fear the idolatrous state of covetousness because the moment things have priority, radical obedience becomes impossible. ⁴⁸⁴

And this love is at the root, not those 3 little words.

⁴⁸³ **The love of money**, referring to the warning of Scriptures; the *love of money* is the root of all evil. 1 Timothy 6:10.

⁴⁸⁴ Richard J. Foster, *Freedom of Simplicity: Finding Harmony in a Complex World*.

“Tie the knot,” to once again imply love, the marriage of two, the bonds therein, and the foundation for a relatively-free and healthy society. But sadly, marriage is on the decline ⁴⁸⁵, the institution collapsing under the weight of statism— as no friend of the family— with such subsidizing of divorce among other measures aimed to undermine first the fathers, then conventional marriage, followed by family and finally society, it’s strength and future. ⁴⁸⁶

All the power [the State] has is what society gives it, plus what it confiscates from time to time on one pretext or another; there is no other source from which State power can be drawn. Therefore, every assumption of State power, whether by gift or seizure, leaves society with so much less power.

And statism depends on the decline of society, its strength, as described above, implied or expressed elsewhere in these compositions, and exemplified by many states regardless of all claims to the contrary, of any commitments to its citizens. And in this trend—spurred-on by divorce reforms—is a condition tantamount to war; a conflict between two institutions, coincidently patriarchal, though contradictory in that one has the potential to love, to care about others, while the other does not, but is self-absorbed on power available, amoral by its nature, and incurably inclined to idealism that blinds *the beast* of its weakness.

⁴⁸⁵ Data released yesterday shows decline in marriage can be seen in the data even before any potential impact of the coronavirus, which is expected to lower the numbers even further due to social distancing-related delays.

[jec.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/republicans/2020/4/marriage-rate-blog-test](https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/republicans/2020/4/marriage-rate-blog-test), U.S. Marriage Rates Hit New Recorded Low “.

⁴⁸⁶ Statism versus society, opposite and opposing ends of the levers of power, the state aims and interest often antithetical to marriage and family.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Tongue in cheek,” as to mean something said in an ironic, flippant, whimsical, or insincere way; it is the kind of comment that should not be *taken at face value* (though in its original form, reflected contempt).

In the compositions prior, here, and to continue, there *is no room* for satire or sensical remarks, *tongue in cheek*, and any other than what I earnestly believe as stated, described, implied as to a cause for my conscience, concern and care. And,

If talk is cheap, then being silent is expensive, and many people, it seems, can't afford to buy into it. ⁴⁸⁷

But also, and in the strong possibility of the unpublished, is that few of any will read these compositions, know of it, or even care if they do/did—which in effect means that I too am silent, my words left for/to an electronic file tucked away on a drive or, as uploaded but laid idle as my website is, has been, rarely visited or made public.

I write most of all to learn and then secondly to learn more, possibly things of truth and fact (as preferably to be better for it, by it, and through it), for whatever the future brings our way.

No, I am not famous or even aspiring to be so, but I am convicted and to (and on) this, have put much time, thought, and typing, expounding on my experiences and of what I learned from related reading as in this collection, *the problems, pains, and pleasure of POWER*.

Wondering whether my writing is worthwhile or worthy ebbs and flows, sometimes lasting for a thought and other times days, weeks. But what I have done and still do is enough to convince myself that my writing does me well, *no tongue in cheek*.

⁴⁸⁷ Anthony Liccione.

“Dead serious,” is by now my disposition, the degrees by which I seek to *learn the ugly truths* or to question the media, the so-called “news”, and the relentless pursuit of power exhibited by state as it presses demagoguery, eliminates, and erases rights and privileges, and silences and subdues any that oppose it. But,

Who is more to be pitied, a writer bound and gagged by policemen or one living in perfect freedom who has nothing more to say? ⁴⁸⁸

For either way, solitude or silenced, the word is never read let alone written; none of these holds the *powers at be* to some degree of accountability, *calling them out* for what they are (and are not), what they purport to be, poised and posing, regal and royal versus *the king without clothes, the naked truth*, bent solely on their own interests.

But who we were is not who we are now; no, we are losing or have lost the willingness to stand, to suffer and sacrifice—not only in public life but more, our personal and private lives, life and living?

All these people talk so eloquently about getting back to good old-fashioned values. Well, as an old poop I can remember back to when we had those old-fashioned values, and I say let's get back to the good old-fashioned First Amendment of the good old-fashioned Constitution of the United States—and to hell with the censors! Give me knowledge or give me death!

Thus, I remain *dead serious*,

And no matter how much the gray people in power despise knowledge, they can't do anything about historical objectivity; they can slow it down, but they can't stop it. ⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸⁸ Kurt Vonnegut.

⁴⁸⁹ Arkady Strugatsky, *Hard to Be a God*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Take a rain check,” as to say, “Not now, but possibly later,” though this one possibly qualifies as *tongue in cheek*, far from *dead serious*, blithely balking on some apparent offer, some “opportunity” as it may be, suggested or sold, though met with indifference, cynically remarked as, “Yeah right,” (backed by the mindset, *not in a million years*).

But enough..., as I am thinking of a John Fogarty song, some lyrics, and the question, “Have you ever seen the rain?”

Someone told me long ago,
There's a calm before the storm,
I know, it's been comin' for some time.

When it's over, so they say,
It'll reign a sunny day,
I know, shinin' down like water.

Yesterday and days before,
Sun is cold and rain is hard,
I know, been that way for all my life.

'Til forever, on it goes,
Through the circle, fast and slow,
I know, it can't stop, I wonder. ⁴⁹⁰

And still I wonder, still I wonder, who'll stop the rain, as I see a bad moon rising, I see trouble on the way, I see earthquakes and lightin', I see bad times headed this way. ⁴⁹¹

As far as any *rain check*, it just seems to matter anymore, promises made and promise broken.

⁴⁹⁰ From Wikipedia, "Have You Ever Seen the Rain?" is a song written by John Fogerty and released as a single in 1971 from the album *Pendulum* (1970) by roots rock group Creedence Clearwater Revival.

⁴⁹¹ John Fogerty, “Bad Moon Rising”, released in April 1969.

“Pay the piper,” as *he who pays the piper calls the tune*, comes from the ancients, a *carving in stone*; those who pay will invariably decide the plan, the result, and thus the *piper plays the “desired”*.... And past, present, and future, this idiom holds true just as “the golden rule”: those who have the gold, rule—whether actual gold or just some of that precious paper with pictures on it.

As to the methods of power via money, force can be cleverly disguised, actually “giving-away” money rather than taking it—but still leveraging....to *get its way*. One might be given money to *play the tune*, to seemingly please or at least pacify the powers that be. One might be offered promises or commitments by institutions that ultimately are diluted or dismissed under any excuse—or none—but only that they, the institutions, decide *the tune*.

The more money in circulation, the less valuable the money as a given, leaving the public with more bills but less value or buying power—that on trend is *not worth a Continental*.⁴⁹² And while one may find more money (access) favorable on the front-end, the rising prices or devaluation of the money is the paradox, inflation as “the hidden tax”. And,

It would be an instructive exercise for the skeptical reader to try to frame a definition of taxation which does not also include theft...if the taxpayer refuses to pay, his assets are seized by force, and if he should resist such depredation, he will be arrested or shot if he should continue to resist.⁴⁹³

The tune undesirable but necessary to those that thirst for power.

⁴⁹² The statement, ***not worth a Continental***, originates from the 1700s, a currency worthless, lacking in value, especially due to economic inflation.

⁴⁹³ Murray Rothbard.

Pondering on points of POWER

“With a grain of salt,” as to one’s cautionary view or opinion, skeptical or doubtful of that read, heard, and even seen.

We live in age of incomparable information, variety, and volume, (as never before), and given such means and method of possibilities, to promulgate perception over reality; that what is read, heard, or even seen is purposed to *paint a false picture*, an illusion, or some farcical impression—the power to control and manipulate, the mind and its bodies, so-called psychological and social engineering.

As foretelling the present age, Aldous Huxley described the transition, the regression of mind under the pressures of such power.

If the first half of the twentieth century was the era of the technical engineers, the second half may well be the era of the social engineers—and the twenty-first century, I suppose, will be the era of World Controllers, the scientific caste system, and *Brave New World*.

Following on, 30 years later, such developments were (and are) well underway—far earlier than he thought possible way back when.... And as to methods or means, drugging or drugs is certainly not *off the table* given the intake of our society starting from the very young, many prescribed with psychotropics, to the mature often consuming *a cocktail* of medications, legal or otherwise, for pain and for *whatever ails you*. Yes, techniques “to love their servitude,” so says Huxley, to obey, to comply, to accept, sedated into submission.

What becomes of a society inculcated with drugs (to include alcohol) is not up for speculation but, in fact, is the one before us; a land largely of lassitude made so by endless wars and expansion, intense surveillance and subjection, relatively few of sober mind and sound judgment, and for those still standing, stubborn and stalwart, the strong possibility that *a grain of salt* is not the right spice, but maybe more, the bitter pill of plunder from a tinge of tyranny.

"Turn the tables," as to change a situation so that one can or has advantage over someone else who previously had an advantage.

In another of intriguing films, *National Treasure*, the father (played by Jon Vought) is abducted by the bad guys and later, in the company of his son (played by Nicholas Cage), suggest that a change in status quo is necessary as a precursor for any attempt at escape or freedom, overcoming their abductors, to succeed. A notable change in conditions sets the stage for some plan's success, to sum it up.

But much earlier in life, perhaps reading *Fahrenheit 451* ⁴⁹⁴, some more advise from the seasoned; some sage advice to *take to heart* in *the coming age*.

Stuff your eyes with wonder," he said, "live as if you'd drop dead in ten seconds. See the world. It's more fantastic than any dream made or paid for in factories. Ask no guarantees, ask for no security, there never was such an animal. And if there were, it would be related to the great sloth which hangs upside down in a tree all day every day, sleeping its life away. To hell with that," he said, "shake the tree and knock the great sloth down...." ⁴⁹⁵

For *the sloth*, as human behavior is passively inclined, is sure to be shaken from its presumed security and slumber, to live and live again, *the tables turned* and status quo no more, for

It doesn't matter what you do, he said, so long as you change something from the way it was before you touched it into something that's like you after you take your hands away. The difference between the man who just cuts lawns, and a real gardener is in the touching, he said.

And given the conditions, *touch and be touched*, wake, and rise, for the plan's opportunity to succeed.

⁴⁹⁴ *Fahrenheit 451* is a 1953 dystopian novel by Ray Bradbury.

⁴⁹⁵ Ray Bradbury.

“Speak of the devil,” as one said when the person of discussion and interest appears unexpectedly (with or without connotations to evil or wickedness, the content, conversation, or character). And for those that have had such a moment, this idiom may serve to *lighten the air*, to say with amusement, “There you are.”

In a book of similar title, and apparently in the spiritual realm of Satanism or Satanic worship, Joseph P. Laycock

Let us instead look at contemporary Satanism for what it really is: a brutal religion of elitism and social Darwinism that seeks to re-establish the reign of the able over the idiotic, of swift justice over injustice, and for a wholesale rejection of egalitarianism as a myth that has crippled the advancement of the human species for the last two thousand years.⁴⁹⁶

And without much of anything to add to this subject, Satanism exposed, is some belief nonetheless that beneath and beyond statism—the deification of the state—is/are *spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms*; those that have, as recorded in Genesis 6, aim to undermine the human genome and to eradicate humanity on whole—using *the rulers, authorities, and powers in the dark world*.

You said in your heart “I will ascend to heaven I will raise my throne above the stars of God I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds I will make myself like the [God].

Manifest in *The Man of Lawlessness* among other creatures foretold, arriving from above and below, within and among us all, to yet again challenge Scripture’s stand and to *speak of the Devil*.

⁴⁹⁶ Joseph P. Laycock, *Speak of the Devil: How the Satanic Temple is Changing the Way We Talk about Religion*.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“Devil in the details,” as *much that meets the eye*, hidden and mysterious, making *more than one bargains for*, more the pity to be found (out) or worse, to *jump out at you* and *take you off your feet*, perhaps to *the bottom* or deeper, *the dark world*.

Having given the idiom an explanation is enough to match it to any cautionary tale of loss, as to:

- “(She/he/it) was the one that got away,”
- “I didn’t see it coming,”
- “It came...and then it was gone,”
- “I had it in my grasp [but...],”
- “I thought it was forever,”

You get the meaning; that life is complicated and with each added life more so, the prospect of permanency perhaps much less than believed, the relationship as “a need” so it seems.

I’m not crying because of you; you’re not worth it. I’m crying because my delusion of who you were was shattered by the truth of who you are. ⁴⁹⁷

And again, *the details*, that one so often overlooks; their dreams or delusions that overshadow or otherwise imagine *the better angels* or that preferred over the possibility of something or someone less.

As to conditions around or about us, the conscious and conscience are both critical to our thinking and crucial to our actions; a disposition of courage, of strength through faith, to see both *the dark world’s* rulers and the *spiritual forces in the heavenly realms*, and to then seek shelter, solace and satisfaction in the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit, the Father, and his Son in every detail.

⁴⁹⁷ Steve Maraboli, *Unapologetically You: Reflections on Life and the Human Experience*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Best of both worlds,” as to mean essentially *having it all* (benefits), a combination of possibly “pure” perfection, whatever the *world(s)* and wherever *best* is found among each and all of us.

One might say or be told, “You live in a different world,” to mean that they are quite different, *out-of-touch* with reality as another thinks it, or just plain weird. “Yes, they’re living in La-La Land,” one remarks of another, “A different world.”

There is so many different worlds, so many different suns. And we have just one world, but we live in different ones. ⁴⁹⁸

And why not..., given that this world is sometimes unwanted or undesired, unsuitable, or unsustainable life as observed, opined. But then, perception is misleading, our thoughts and actions driven and determined by who knows what, good or bad, right, wrong, partial, or completely removed from reality.

...I saw that there was only me. There was only me who could worry about what was happening here, inside these walls of my life. Other people had their own worlds to worry about, and in the end, they had to fend for themselves, just like us. ⁴⁹⁹

And it seems that no matter which *world(s)* we pass or possess, there is conflict and competition, struggle, and suffering, within and among these places, the times.

Yet there remains *a new world*; not as placed with this country, *the colonies*, but to come—as *once was and is to come*—that is described as “restored”, perfect in all ways, and pleasing to God; and it is this world that Christ, on ascension, was said to go and prepare, to make ready for the faithful—the world as is, no more.

⁴⁹⁸ Mark Knopfler, *Dire Straits - Brothers in Arms*.

⁴⁹⁹ Markus Zusak, *Underdog*.

“Out of this world,” following from the last page; one who is *zoned-out* or *in another galaxy* or at least Venus, Mars, and other lights, visible or not, *way out yonder*.

As humanity ventures further into the galaxy, notions of what is “out of this world” are blurred, the idea that Earth is no longer a base or the sky as “the limit”. Still, the idiom is not the literal but much more about (of) beliefs, behaviors simply summed-up as strange.

Maybe some “strange” is just plain normal; folks unsatisfied with “this world”, seeking others..., some place more suitable where

...we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world.⁵⁰⁰

And though some find Earth as basically a good place, the possibility remains for a *Dark Winter*⁵⁰¹ among other cyclical or evolving changes, the collection and series potentially making Earth much less pleasant, downright difficult and unsustainable on some scale(s).

Where do we go from here? Could or can we expect or anticipate *a weird world* as few have ever experienced; the kind attached to a remark or more, a serious statement or question, as:

- “I never thought...,”
- “This can’t be happening,”
- “When will this (or it) end,”

And as (or when) this *dark winter* approaches, any warming or relief will be more welcomed or cherished assuming it ever shows its face again, times as predicted, cyclical in nature or more, the making of *the masters*, maniacal, malicious, and malevolent.

⁵⁰⁰ C. S. Lewis.

⁵⁰¹ ***Dark Winter*** is described in earlier footnotes, but simply put, very difficult times.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Throw in the towel,” comes from boxing, as to concede the match to the other. But outside the ring, this idiom may imply suicide, one taking one’s life, as “There are no sides in suicide.” ⁵⁰²

Suicide is on the rise and in some measure attached to the pandemic response: lockdown, closers, job loss, mandates, abuses of authority, exploitation of science and medicine, and all such things contributing to despondency and despair, described by one as,

He did not care what the end would be, and in his lucid moments overvalued his indifference. [] The fear grows shadowy; and Imagination, the enemy of men, the father of all terrors, unstimulated, sinks [] in the dullness of exhausted emotion. ⁵⁰³

But whatever the mix of reporting, regulation and rigor on this subject, plain reason suggest that fears fomented during the pandemic do indeed have an adverse effect on society and its persons. Fear:

1. Weakens our immune system and can cause cardiovascular damage, gastrointestinal problems such as ulcers and irritable bowel syndrome, and decreased fertility. It can lead to accelerated ageing and even premature death.
2. Impairs memories and cause damage to certain parts of the brain, such as the hippocampus. To someone in chronic fear, the world looks scary and their memories confirm that.
3. Interrupts processes in our brains that allow us to regulate emotions...impacts our thinking and decision-making in negative ways, leaving us susceptible to intense emotions and impulsive reactions.

But they know this..., which is why fear is fomented, as a force.

⁵⁰² Anthony Liccione.

⁵⁰³ Joseph Conrad, *Lord Jim*.

"Up against the ropes," is another from the *boxing world*, but again outside the ring can mean *pinned-in*, without a way to escape the onslaught, the last throes before *going down*.

Somewhat similar, the words of Ronald Reagan playing a historical Notre Dame college football player, George Gipp.

Rock, some day when the team is up against it, when the breaks are beating the boys, ask'em to go in there with all they've got and give 'em one for the Gipper.⁵⁰⁴

And a great line it is, that a player in his last moments of life offers a word of inspiration; a few words, but more meaningful for two reasons: one, he is near death, and two, he was an All-American.

As much as we may cherish our sports, a deep admiration for certain players, the competition and contest, it (sports) is just a game and each team member, just a player. And though sports have become much more since the days of George Gipp, usually measured in money, the fact remains that we each are sometimes *up against a rope*, "the breaks...beating," and by any other idiom or description for tough times, impossible situations, overwhelming odds. And to that, a short quote from the actual head coach, Knute Rockne: "Win or lose, do it fairly."

Even if you're *against the ropes*, don't cheat your way out, *a blow below the belt* or an action remotely tied to boxing; no, do the right thing, the fair thing, the honest thing, the honorable thing, the moral thing, the thing that you aren't ashamed (of) in spite of the beating and bruising, the bleeding and the blows, the blunders and by any other name, the losses of which the cause may not be you, yours....

⁵⁰⁴ From Wikipedia, **George Gipp** was nicknamed "The Gipper", was a college football player at the University of Notre Dame under head coach Knute Rockne

Pondering on points of POWER

“Take the edge off,” as often applied literally or figuratively as a drug or treatment to reduce pain, the bite....

There are many ways and degrees to reduce physical pain, the record as legion with drugs, legal or illegal, and the drugged, prescribed or simply as personal choice, attempts to end pain or at least *take the edge off* the pains therein, thereby.

Billions of dollars, trying unsuccessfully to keep drugs out of the world's most porous border? ...And not enough money from anywhere going into the root causes of the drug problem itself.

And the billions spent keeping drug offenders locked up in prison, the cells now so crowded we have to give early release to murderers. Not to mention the fact that two-thirds of all the “non-drug” offenses in America are committed by people high on dope or alcohol. And our solutions are the same futile non-solutions—build more prisons, hire more police, spend more and more billions of dollars not curing the symptoms while we ignore the disease. Most people in my area who want to kick drugs can't afford to get into a treatment program unless they have blue-chip health insurance, which most of them don't. And there's a six-month-to-two-year waiting list to get a bed in a subsidized treatment program. We're spending almost \$2 billion poisoning cocaine crops and kids over here, while there's no money at home to help someone who wants to get off drugs....⁵⁰⁵

And this... is not going away, simply because it is intended to remain with us, coined as a cultural or social problem but more the economics, the lucrative aspects that always drive and determine the way we go, what we do or don't do, and who it is done to, for, by as *the beat goes on* and the problems persists. On the one hand is the apparent effort *to say “No”* and on the other the undaunted effort....

⁵⁰⁵ Don Winslow, *The Power of the Dog*.

“To the core,” can be the back half of the absolution, *rotten to the core*, incorrigible and beyond correction, and possibly absent any or all ways of recovery, redemption, recompense, or resolve.

I marvel at the placidity of the Utopian who imagines that man is perfectible. There is no denying that the human creature is born selfish, abusive, vile. Just look around you and see. Society cynical and ferocious, the humble heckled and pillaged by the rich traffickers in necessities. Everywhere the triumph of the mediocre and unscrupulous, everywhere the apotheosis of crooked politics and finance. And you think you can make any progress against a stream like that? No, man has never changed. His soul was corrupt in the days of Genesis and is not less rotten at present. Only the form of his sins varies. Progress is the hypocrisy which refines the vices.

And while this view or opinion may seem bleak, it is however true of humanity; depraved and in desperate need of recovery-redemption, the individual soul—not the soulless institution—is accountable.

Each person of age must (and will) give accountability for what he was, his desires against his creator, the Lord of all. When and specifically how this will happen remains a mystery and yet, *to the core*, all earth dwellers, alive are not, are destined to this *Great and Terrible Day* ⁵⁰⁶. Yes, we each are (and will be) called to account with *those called*, received, recovered, and redeemed, while the balance rejected. And whether I believe this..., I too am responsible and accountable *to the core*. How then should we live?

⁵⁰⁶ From Wikipedia, the ***Great and Terrible Day*** is a biblical term and theme used in both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament as in "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come" (Joel 2:31, cited in Acts 2:20).

Pondering on points of POWER

“Treat like dirt,” is to devalue another, to reduce them to nothing of account, with all malice, despising who they are or are not. For it matters not to the *darkened* heart, devoid of consideration, for another let alone themselves. Yes, *the heart* that does not see its ways, not able to admit or acknowledge *the darkness*, but is too proud, pompous, or psychotic ⁵⁰⁷ to see what they are doing, done.

A sociopath, on the other hand, has the same regard for financial obligations as he does to personal ones: no remorse, no conscience. Get what you want now, and damn the consequences later. ⁵⁰⁸

And more (or less, depending on how such deficiency is measured),

He simply does not possess the emotional capacity to comprehend how his actions affect others.

They are *full of themselves*, locked into their self-interest, absent any possibility for a meaningful, healthy relationship. They are likened to an institution, a corporation; coy, clever, but most of all, unaccountable for wrongdoing, duplicitous, destructive, deadened.

While I don't think sociopaths have any sort of moral urge to do good things, I think they can and do act morally in the context of pursuing their own advantage. A good analogy would be a corporation. ⁵⁰⁹

And devoid of much if not all conscience, morality, or self-sacrifice.

⁵⁰⁷ Psychosis such as sociopathic or narcissistic behaviors, let alone the spiritual influences, wicked and evil.

⁵⁰⁸ Mary Jo Buttafuoco, *Getting It Through My Thick Skull: Why I Stayed, What I Learned, and What Millions of People Involved with Sociopaths Need to Know*.

⁵⁰⁹ M. E. Thomas, *Confessions of a Sociopath: A Life Spent Hiding in Plain Sight*.

“Throw dust in the eyes,” as more the literal, used notably in a fight, almost always by “the bad guy”, the villain, as with *hitting below the belt* or some other underhanded action or move.

Continuing with sociopathic behavior, the figurative *dust in the eyes* cast by such persons can momentarily blind the opposition, *clouding their sight with sand* or whatever else such *manipulation* can muster toward such evil ends. But as to interrelations, unhealthy as it is, the irony is that the sociopath is *the blinded*, with *dust in the eyes* while the other(s) potentially able to see or recognize *foul play*—but not necessarily willing to confront or contend with, confront, or challenge *the controller*.

“Blind to what or whom,” goes the question for clarification, understanding: blind to needs or views as a necessary condition for any meaningful and healthy relationship, thus leaving others *in the dust, running over* others for as long as the sociopath can—or if the other(s) allow—all trust *thrown to the wind*.

Yes, trust is the cornerstone...but for the sociopath is merely another word or action for exploitation; one more of their weapons in their arsenal of manipulation and control—using others (up), to their last full measure of generosity and goodness.

I regularly comment on my desire to exploit my admirers or to kill babies and cute animals, and I don't even need to laugh or smile for people to think I am joking.⁵¹⁰

Any attempt(s) or accomplishments to gain understanding is commendable however because it often demands that *the affected*, those manipulated and exploited, separate from the sociopath as a last if not necessary measure to retain their own sanity, sense of self-worth and esteem.

⁵¹⁰ M. E. Thomas.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Caution to the wind,” or to *throw caution to the wind*, is to disregard the risks or possible costs, *looking it square in the face* and, as to what you think you know, defiantly forging ahead. But as to *what you think you know* and what you know, these two are not the same, right?

Beginning on radio and continuing well into television, a game show, *Truth or Consequences* ⁵¹¹, amounting to trivia questions that, if the contestant’s answer not truthful, led to some relatively innocuous but amusing, entertaining consequence. And, as the game went or goes, *throwing caution to the wind* hardly applied, any “real” risks, costs of consequences never the case. Then there are the realities of life and living, the so-called “real world” with real risks, the consequences, and the costs to consider.

The thing about real life is, when you do something stupid, it normally costs you. In books the heroes can make as many mistakes as they like. It doesn't matter what they do because everything works out in the end. They'll beat the bad guys and put things right and everything ends up cool....

Real life's nasty. It's cruel. It doesn't care about heroes and happy endings and the way things should be. In real life, bad things happen. People die. Fights are lost. Evil often wins ⁵¹²

Rules or not, stupid, smart, something—or nothing at all—does (or do) conjure-up consequences, outcomes *as the wind blows*.

⁵¹¹ From Wikipedia: contestants received roughly two seconds to answer a trivia question correctly (usually an off-the-wall question that no one would be able to answer correctly, or a bad joke) before "Beulah the Buzzer" sounded. On the rare occasions that a contestant did answer correctly, the host would reveal that the question had multiple parts.

⁵¹² Darren Shan, *A Living Nightmare*.

“**Dead-nuts**,” to mean certain or precise, with some association to the phrases: *dead-set* or *dead-on*; or the Brits prefer, *spot-on*.

With more attention to “nuts”, not “dead-nuts” or its associations, the time present and future bringing out or up more *nuts* or crazy behavior than one can *shake a stick at*.

Sure, one can be *crazy* in love as so famously sang by Patsy Cline, but the craziness that is coming out is not so loving, affectionate, or adoring. No, this rising craziness is dangerous—*no two ways about it*—and is going to *make its mark* as a sign of the times, many headed *dead-nuts* to *The Edge*.

The Edge... There is no honest way to explain it because the only people who really know where it is are the ones who have gone over (it).⁵¹³

On “The Edge” is *on the brink*, the precipice or by any other description, *the moment of no return*.

“Why is craziness on the rise,” as a *voice of sanity*, sense, or reason, as a starting point to understand and possibly prepare, come what may—or will—in this society over-saturated with psychotic behavior, mental-illness real or imagined. Why, with craziness to come and consider on such scale, any sanity and sound-mindedness may be the extreme, exceptional, amid *the maddening world*.

I'd just be the catcher in the rye and all. I know it's crazy, but that's the only thing I'd really like to be. I know it's crazy.⁵¹⁴

Times are coming when the anyone who courageously talks sense will be criticized, criminalized, and condemned as sure as *dead-nuts* no matter.

⁵¹³ Hunter S. Thompson, *Hell's Angels*.

⁵¹⁴ J.D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Thrown to the wolves,” is, in the contemporary, possibly heard as *thrown under the bus*; but to cover every possibility, one may become *the scapegoat*, sacrificed, or abandoned, for seemingly sound reasons, benefit—or for no reason at all other than they are too weak or powerless to resist, to restrain *the mob* or lynching.

As a possible *silver lining in the dark cloud* of one selected for *the wolves* or to be *thrown under the bus*, is that

People will often give you a detailed tour of the underside of the bus that they will throw you under later.⁵¹⁵

That at least puts one on notice, their impending lot in life, any plight of no regard and any flight of no report, given *mob rule*, the supposed view of *the collective* (*pawns* of the state or other such institutions).

What is more (or less, depending on the credence of craziness), is that to identify or detect craziness one must acknowledge some level of craziness; for to deny any attention to craziness is to fail to recognize all and taken to the extreme—to be *blind as bat* when it come to *crazy as a loon*. Thus, some measure of *craziness*, as with the experience of freedom, is necessary to warn of (or ward off) too much of the first, madness, and too little of the second, freedom, as another trend of today’s society.

Craziness comes and freedom goes, the first as necessary for the second. Any who remain relatively sane of mind and sure of liberty have no place or position among *the collective thrown to the wolves*, *thrown under the bus*, or just thrown away, disposed and discarded, the devaluing of humanity on a scale and scope as never known and for many as hardly noticed, though *the wolves* run in packs and the *train of buses* lumber by, stopping only for the flesh to tear or the bones to crush, leaving more for them and less of us.

⁵¹⁵ Steffan Piper.

“**Outfoxed**,” to mean out matched in cleverness or cunning, one outsmarted by another.

Taking a bit of detour from craziness (as if war and craziness do not coexist), is one or more books on the American Civil War by Burke Davis.⁵¹⁶

In these times where such figures are sometimes maligned, their monuments *taken-down*, the names removed from schools—seemingly aimed to eliminate any history of slavery, is that tragically, and on an increasing scale, slavery is growing by the day given our population and unprecedented levels of the ever present, punitive state,⁵¹⁷ given the irrefutable and indisputable consequences of unchecked power and its corruption, *statism on steroids*!

To say that many are duped or outfoxed is an understatement; that anyone who knows history can surely agree and accept that more state power means less social strength⁵¹⁸ and that any nation that engages continuous war abroad will not be able to maintain liberty at home.⁵¹⁹ As it is and as is becoming, the next such civil war will not be the same just—as the chattel slavery of history differs from the political slavery today, tomorrow, yet ignorance abounds amid arrogance with few humble to remain *outfoxed*.

⁵¹⁶ Several books by Burke Davis on the Civil War include: *The Long Surrender*, *Sherman's March*, *To Appomattox*, and *They Called Him Stonewall*; *Gray Fox: Robert E. Lee and the Civil War*; *Sherman's March*; *The Civil War: Strange & Fascinating Facts*; and *They Called Him Stonewall: A Life of Lieutenant General T. J. Jackson, CSA*.

⁵¹⁷ The centralization and concentration of power on a world or international scale demands proportional increases in the state with the inevitable, corresponding decline of individual liberty and freedom.

⁵¹⁸ For more on this trade-off, the balance of power, see the writing of Albert J. Nock.

⁵¹⁹ James Madison.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Calm before the storm,” is the silence that comes before the deafening noise, the stillness before the violent outbreak, or possibly the peace before the war, civil or uncivil; it is *calm*, even *the storm*, as much a point of view or perspective as the literal, the learned.

“Are we facing another civil war,” is a question stemming from the previous page and one of growing concern, our society described and defined as fragmented, *balkanized*, and broken (beyond restoration). What is to become of the U.S.?

The U.S. is (and has been) on the decrease against other national powers across the spectrum of economic, political, financial, and social viability and virtue. This land is securely on a road of ruin—made so by powers that aim to absorb it into a world order—destroying any sovereignty, setting the stage for more concentrated and centralized power beyond and before.... What is happening is in some sense like a controlled demolition (as with the toppling of the towers on 911)⁵²⁰. And though attributed to a variety of other causes—more to creations commensurate with the deceptions of corruption—the death of U.S. is craziness beyond the past and present, *shooting for stars already fallen*.

Have we learned nothing from history, vice, and virtue against the vile, the villains and the vanquishers that sit the shadows and play *the chessboard* to their aims and ambitions never ending, never earnest, but evil—though they call it “good”?

Yes, it is coming and while we wait, yet the clouds continue to form, the thunderclaps near the lightning that flashes, the wind howls, and tempest blows, *no calm before the storm*.

⁵²⁰ To watch video of the collapse of both Towers can produce no other conclusion than a controlled demolition—though the downing is pinned to the airplanes, the acclaimed terrorists, and a plot fueled by the false premise that they hate our virtue.

“Taken by storm,” in the vein of weather related idioms, the radar fixed on *the eye* but *the eyes of* many busy with diversions, saturated by they (them) that reign by (or with) any and all attractions that one might know (of) but pay no mind, no matter, in the *calm before the storm*, the veritable and vexing *shell game of the heavy hand* and *long arm* amid and amongst the otherwise onlookers who *throw caution the wind*. Yet,

There's always another storm. It's the way the world works. Snowstorms, rainstorms, windstorms, sandstorms, and firestorms. Some are fierce and others are small. You have to deal with each one separately, but you need to keep an eye on what's brewing for tomorrow. ⁵²¹

Always another heightening, another crisis for another opportunity—the way it works—lending to a shift of power, a movement of the masters, for the masters, and by them too.

There is however the master above all masters; the one believed to be the creator of the creation (of both *the faithful* and the faithless) in his image. There is the embracing that *the creator* who *sets-up (or allows) kings and deposes, gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning*. ⁵²²

And among the faithful..., *taken by storm*, is the potential for perseverance to press on toward that *upward calling* ⁵²³ as the only course before them, whatever storms, natural or unnatural, manmade or spiritual, physical or otherwise; our salvation against the wicked and evil within, about and before us each.

⁵²¹ Maria V. Snyder, *Fire Study*.

⁵²² From the scriptures, Daniel 2:21, the admission and conclusion of the king of the Babylonian Empire.

⁵²³ Words in translation, used by Paul, Philippians 3:14, regarding the only course beyond the present, fallen world.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Too close for comfort,” means just that; that whatever lurks, storm on no storm, the sense is that its too close, too certain, too dangerous to deny, a foreboding too fear-ridden to overcome.

In a novel of the same title ⁵²⁴, the central character and subject remarks,

“I let him take everything, until there was nothing left for him to take.”

And while I know little next to nothing about it, the book’s story, my guess is that it covers at least one unhealthy relationship in the genre of a murder-mystery.

A second excerpt from the same, not necessarily of the same central character,

“It’s hard to remember that the outside and the inside of people are two very different things.”

And *what you see is not what you get*—or what gets you, me, us, is not always evident, apparent, sensed or known.

What I think I know it is not always so, of course, and what I sense may not be clear, likely caused by fear rather than love, the latter as the ideal way of being, *comfort* or not.

Love is the best course and, taking it all the way, certain to be loss(es), the sacrifice and suffering as more than *too close*, deep, and then deeper, with those that *take everything until there is (was) nothing left*, perhaps displaying their *true colors* rather than a cameo as small and superficial as a mere means to an end.

I don’t know, sometimes *too close* to believe in nothing but love as real and true, only to discover that *the outside and the inside of persons (can be) two very different things* and one will go far....

⁵²⁴ Eleanor Moran, *Too Close for Comfort*.

“Turn back on,” is one unfamiliar to me; but it is one that omits the key part, “one”, between the “Turn” and “back” so accepted as: *Turn one’s back on*, or to ignore, disregard and even betray...; forsaking what seemingly was a friendship, marriage, or other relation. When one *turns their back* on another, the rejection is more than palpable, but is or can be deeply painful, devastating.

In (or following) the action of *turning your back*, the *now behind* thing may not be another person but rather a problem or something else, difficult, practically impossible to face and more, to resolve. But if the reason or cause is because you cannot face your own faults or something that your conscience is trying to make clear, then

When you turn your back to the truth, the truth will soon appear before you! ⁵²⁵

But there is some form of freedom in not only confronting the truth but embracing it—simply because anything less is, well, not true or truth, and *time has a way of telling truth* with all the attendant consequences of delaying, disregarding it. The longer the lie(s) languish (or deception), the greater the consequence(s) analogous to a festering wound, infection and possible death if delayed too long.

And then there is the justice system that, in my understanding, is legion for overlooking truth (more often as facts)—as expedience dictates. Why bother with any facts when punishment is a certainty and *due process* is merely a method that, while it sounds right, is *put behind* as the system defaults to predetermined guilt—a charge as practically a conviction. Yes, this system has long *turned its back* on *the defendant rights* that it purports to uphold—the truth too much to demand, or even defend, when expedience is the course.

⁵²⁵ Mehmet Murat ildan.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Bare bones**,” means barely enough, if the essentials, and is only greater than nothing at all.

When it comes to living, lifestyle, the question of *needs* is beyond relevance, passing well into affluence, convenience, and comfort that, compared to much of the world’s standard or even concept, is simply *over the top*, consumerism, and materialism as *the reigning king*.

Reminded of an encounter years ago, an apparently single man standing next to his boat hitched to his new truck in front of his fine house on the water, said, “And everything is financed,” which means, of course, that each and all are not his, outright—and even if they were outright..., what is certain that they are temporary. Meanwhile, and as our structure goes,

Armaments, universal debt, and planned obsolescence—those are the three pillars of Western prosperity. If war, waste, and moneylenders were abolished, you’d collapse. And while you people are overconsuming the rest of the world sinks more and more deeply into chronic disaster.⁵²⁶

And he was (is) right; that when we collapse, we will take much of the world with us.⁵²⁷ We are,

A culture that does not grasp the vital interplay between morality and power, which mistakes management techniques for wisdom, and fails to understand that the measure of a civilization is its compassion, not its speed or ability to consume, condemns itself to death.⁵²⁸

Consequently, intentionally, inadvertently, condemning others..., while stripping us of *bare bones*.

⁵²⁶ Aldous Huxley, *Island*.

⁵²⁷ This is based on a comment by Chris Hedges during an interview on his book, *America: The Farewell Tour*, perhaps given the stretch of U.S. hegemony, both militarily and economically.

⁵²⁸ Chris Hedges.

“Tasted blood,” means to achieve a small victory or at least an advantage, giving confidence to perhaps pursue a complete victory.

Victory is, after all, that desired. Who wants to lose, to fail or end up at *the bottom*? Practically no one wants to lose; to bleed if not to death, then to faintness, unconsciousness, and utter uselessness. But could be it true that,

Sometimes the prize is not worth the costs. The means by which we achieve victory are as important as the victory itself.⁵²⁹

Could it be that, as scripted in the film, *The Patriot*, that the words or script of Lord Cornwallis⁵³⁰ are true; that the victory is judged additionally by the “the manner in which it’s fought”?

Power left unchecked does surely lead to more than *tasted blood* or outright victory, all means and measure beyond..., to *see it through* no matter the costs, consequences—even the *blowback*.⁵³¹

There is a determined and decided “terrorist” and then there is terrorism as defined—and there is the key question(s) pertaining to *who is whom, what is what, and when is when*?

How can you have a war on terrorism when war itself is terrorism?⁵³²

But principle(s) or are not necessarily a priority, given terrorism as defined, when *tasted blood* is not enough; no, the *bare bones* much be crushed into dust while the winds, tempest of/from terrorism, *blows it back*.

⁵²⁹ Brandon Sanderson, *The Way of Kings*.

⁵³⁰ The script occurring in a heated conversation with the Colonel of the Dragoons, renown for “brutal tactics”, the killing of women and children and the ravaging of colonists, home and hearth.

⁵³¹ The term **blowback** was used previously; it refers to unintended consequences of aggression as first noted by the CIA.

⁵³² Howard Zinn.

“Bull by the horns,” or deal with a difficult situation in a very direct way.

There is *much to be said* (admired) for taking charge, especially *above and beyond the call of duty*. And there of plenty of speakers and authors that carry this theme using an endless number of metaphors, associations, and applications—as the sort of thing we want to hear, do, and be. Again, who wants to lose, give-up or give-in, when *the blood* is there to taste, spit or swallow, and the *bare bones* are all but crushed to dust?

Does *the dust of bare bones blowback*? Sure, we hear and even read about it. But that does not stop us from doing it again and again, over, and over, lending to the greatest debt(s) a nation has ever incurred; more than money, but blood and bones, for something they have, and we want, masked by subterfuge along with a sense of urgency, the dire determination for democracy, the threat of terrorism or some other cause for fear, that *does the trick*.

But then history (of such *a* nation), that centralized, concentrated, unchecked power does invariably destroy itself; that eventually, like an indomitable beast, it consumes its own tail and in the fury of its prowess and the flurry of its pride—tasting its own blood and seeing its own bare bones—it does not cease, but consumes until its last, dying breath.

When other countries run sustained trade deficits, they must finance these by selling off domestic assets or running into debt — debt which they are obliged to pay. It seems that only the Americans are so bold as to say “Screw the world. We’re going to do whatever we want!”⁵³³

And the beast does not stop until....

⁵³³ Michael Hudson, *The Bubble and Beyond*.

“Buck stops here,” is historically attached to President Harry Truman, and understood to mean taking responsibility or, if *passing the buck*, deferring responsibility.

Turning again to quotes, this one comes from Pearl S. Buck ⁵³⁴, who is one of the first remembered from my school days’ reading lists, but from, *Fighting Angel*, she writes:

...I had learned from Thoreau, who doubtless learned it from Confucius, that if a man comes to do his own good for you, then must you flee that man and save yourself.

And it is in this vein, where the oft applied “common good” is not about *the commons*, but on the contrary, is about “the good” for a relative few, their interests, desires, means, and demented methods.

As an example of *passing the buck*, legalized abortion is the exercise of individual will, “my body, my choice”, while in truth is exploiting *the individual*, as the cover for merely depopulation—and especially for the lower classes of society.

Black Lives Matters ⁵³⁵, (for what little is understood) could make a mark by challenging legalized abortion (given the substantial number of abortions of unborn black children), yet they do not and will not because *powers at are* determined to keep the programmatic genocide they’ve instituted, the oppression of peoples via murder on a scale that dwarfs police violence and its homicide.

⁵³⁴ From Good-Reads, **Pearl S. Buck** was a bestselling and Nobel Prize-winning author. Her classic novel *The Good Earth* (1931) was awarded a Pulitzer Prize and William Dean Howells Medal. Throughout her life she worked in support of civil and women’s rights, and established Welcome House, the first international, interracial adoption agency.

⁵³⁵ **Black Livers Matter** is a global organization in the US, UK, and Canada, whose mission is to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Outside the box,” usually preceded with “Think,” or something like that, the idiom is an appeal for the unconventional, pushing the imagination, innovation to new heights. And again, Pearl S. Buck.

Wandering is never waste, dear boy,' he said. 'While you wander you will find much to wonder about, and wonder is the first step to creation.

And in this vein, wandering...beyond *the box*, is people; that as Pearl explains, *hold the key* to understanding who and what we are—and are not. Yes, people and their books, thoughts made into words.

Books he would always learn from, for people, great people, put the best of themselves into books. Books were a distillation of people. But people would be his teachers, and people were not in schoolrooms. People were everywhere.

Which is to reinforce the reasons for knowing; first their books and then the persons and what they think and, if their thinking changes, what drives them to it, through it, ideally to greater understanding of humanity and in turn themselves. And on her journey, in her memoir, Pearl writes about sorrow:

We learn as much from sorrow as from joy, as much from illness as from health, from handicap as from advantage—and indeed perhaps more.

And more,

It was in those days that I learned to distinguish between the two kinds of people in the world: those who have known inescapable sorrow and those who have not.

And still, with inescapable sorrow, is:

Endurance is only the beginning. There must be acceptance and the knowledge that sorrow fully accepted brings its own gifts. For there is an alchemy in sorrow. It can be transmuted into wisdom, which, if it does not bring joy, can yet bring happiness.

Our life and living *outside the box* of what it was before.

"Backed into a corner," is another from boxing (as previously, *in the ropes* and *through in the towel*). Unfamiliar with the techniques of this sport, still, *backed into a corner* is not the place to be, blow after blow—and nowhere to go.

Can it be that sometimes one prefers *a corner*; not one as in boxing but as described, "a corner of the world" where they seemingly don't have to deal with other people, the loathing of others' company as strictly a strain, not a gain, on life and living. And to this, separation and isolation, Pearl continues:

The person who tries to live alone will not succeed as a human being. His heart withers if it does not answer another heart. His mind shrinks away if he hears only the echoes of his own thoughts and finds no other inspiration.

And one does not have to be physical separated either but more often socially or emotionally, their choice to *cut-off* all otherwise opportunity and to *go it alone*—they think—on a solo journey, a single mind, heart, and body—never mind the effect, consequences.

There is/are among humanity a powerful sort that are of such mindset; a heartless sort that believe they are superior to the masses and therefore are deserving of not an isolated life but one worthy a world devoid of the masses. This sort is *nothing new under the sun*; the spirit of such superior thinking stems further back in time, but now more than ever, possesses the power, technology, to do more than ever before, a *kill-pill* the world over.

If "the test of a civilization is in the way that it cares for its helpless members" ⁵³⁶, then such plans paint a clear picture: civilization is *backed into a corner*, with no course or case to consider but to *take blow after blow*, a full-body takedown.

⁵³⁶ Pearl S. Buck, *My Several Worlds*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Ball in your court,” is simply that it’s yours to choose or decide, whatever it is, somewhat as *the buck stops here*.

This is arguably another of *the deck* used for motivating, managing, and moving persons to *be all that they can be*. Yes, it does seem to *make its mark*, one to another, to bring to fore that first, *the court* is “your court” and the ball is in your play, both carrying opportunity and even responsibility.

There are those memories of such advice, counsel, and guidance, where someone told or something indicted some similar comment, possibly a command. And as to how the event(s) unfolded is in part ours individually too; any recollection or account of how it turned out, whether opportunity knocked and if so, what we did to address it, possibly welcome, and embrace it, and further, cherish and savor it as a key, even life changing, moment, now memory.

We old athletes carry the disfigurements and markings of contests remembered only by us and no one else. Nothing is more lost than a forgotten game.⁵³⁷

And the above, not necessarily from his book, *My Losing Season*⁵³⁸, though it does follow the theme, the memories of the wins and losses, the strains, and the gains while *the ball is in your court*.

⁵³⁷ Pat Conroy.

⁵³⁸ From patconroy.com: Conroy takes the reader through his last year playing basketball, as point guard and captain of the Citadel Bulldogs. Flashing back constantly to the drama of his coming of age, he presents all the conflict and love that have been at the core of his novels. Conroy vividly recreates his senior year at that now-famous military college in Charleston, South Carolina, but he also tells the story of his heartbreaking childhood and of the wonderful series of events that conspired to rescue his spirit.

“Out of time,” is not precisely “clock 0:00”, but means that it practically is that whatever time remains, it is insufficient: the seconds following the moments that you are *running out of time* or, as sometimes said, “In the 11th hour,” as another underscoring under-time.

What is time ⁵³⁹ depends in part on the context. *Time* may be the current time where you are, your zone, or it may be, as in physics, “what the clock reads,”

Nevertheless, diverse fields such as business, industry, sports, the sciences, and the performing arts all incorporate some notion of time into their respective measuring systems. ⁵⁴⁰

But as a base of other units of measure, *time* gives meaning to speed, velocity, acceleration, as a common occurrence of *everyday life*.

In another of interest and intrigue, *Margin Call* ⁵⁴¹, a chief manager of an investment firm asks the question, “What time is it,” on which hearing a response, says “@\$ck me,” only to ask the same question again, seconds later, followed by the same remark—all of this exchange to *press home the point* that time is of the essence for a hard decision in a critical juncture, arguably for survival .

⁵³⁹ From Wikipedia, **time** is the continued sequence of existence and events that occurs in an apparently irreversible succession from the past, through the present, into the future. It is a component quantity of various measurements used to sequence events, to compare the duration of events or the intervals between them, and to quantify rates of change of quantities in material reality or in the conscious experience.

⁵⁴⁰ Wikipedia: Time.

⁵⁴¹ From Wikipedia, ***Margin Call*** is 2011 American financial thriller film capturing a very critical moment in an investment firm when, on realizing an impending loss, conducts a “fire sale” to avert its demise, triggering a substantial loss across the market, industry and beyond.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Take a back seat,” is to subordinate or yield to another, giving them *the wheel*, acquiescing control, merely *going along for the ride* perhaps without a say, bye or leave, in the matter.

Taking to silence is possibly another form of compliance; compromising one’s voice or position as either forced or as magnanimously offered, “For the greater good,” but then,

If I were to remain silent, I’d be guilty of complicity.⁵⁴²

No matter the audience (size, positions...) or interest, or whatever the possibility of trouble or punishment,

The greatest danger, I argued, was civil obedience, the submission of individual conscience to governmental authority. Such obedience led to the horrors we saw in totalitarian states, and in liberal states it led to the public’s acceptance of war whenever the so-called democratic government decided on it.⁵⁴³

And to question or counter..., is then civil disobedience—refusing to submit whether subversion of law & order or objecting to the corruption among and within the highest ranks—as with no appetite or appeal for an apple *rotten to the core* whether due a worm or other, but still mushy and spoiled.

But then, “the back-seat driver” was (is) the one who insist on control, telling the driver what to do, where to go, etc. Not that advice is unwarranted, but it sure annoying and distracting at least and downright repugnant to most (the most). And where *the rubber meets the road* is that the driver drives or else stops the car and either takes *a back seat* or walks, preferably toward freedom either way.

⁵⁴² Albert Einstein.

⁵⁴³ Howard Zinn, *You Can’t Be Neutral on a Moving Train: A Personal History of Our Times*.

“Turn a blind eye,” is to simply ignore or overlook something or someone (possibly, that should not be...), presumably due to indifference but possibly fear, that as said, “I don’t want get involved.” And taking this idiom on a theme like the previous,

If you turn a blind eye to the world now, history will turn a blind eye to you later. (Ignoring an issue makes you a tacit supporter of it).⁵⁴⁴

That one not only remain silent but even less, give a care—their interests and passions elsewhere if at all.

Yes, indifference or apathy is one possibility—and especially in the present given that such becomes, and then overcomes, in the decline of a society;⁵⁴⁵ such that, “The opposite of love is not hate. It is indifference.”⁵⁴⁶ And as the Scriptures describe it, that “the love of many will grow cold,”⁵⁴⁷ is a possibility if just to *turn a blind eye.*, or walk passively along, ignoring the incident, innocent for the moment.

But then there is fear; a sense that one stands-up or stands-out on behalf of something, even right or good, or someone who clearly needs help, accepting the possibilities and consequences. Sure, we care for or about ourselves, *but things don’t matter to persons until they matter*, and eventually most will care; unfortunately, for most that do..., it will be long overdue, a time that has come and gone, conditions and consequences protracted and accelerated by complacency, apathy and fear, *a blind eye* and perhaps a seared heart.

⁵⁴⁴ Stewart Stafford.

⁵⁴⁵ **Apathy** is understood to a phase or cycle over the rise and decline of societies.

⁵⁴⁶ Wilhelm Stekel, *The Beloved Ego: Foundations of the New Study of the Psyche*.

⁵⁴⁷ Matthew 24:12, regarding *The End Times*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Benefit of the doubt,” as to accept something/someone as honest or deserving of trust even though there are doubts whatever. But why believe or presume something as true, someone as truthful, when in doubt?

Once more an interesting film by the same word, *Doubt* ⁵⁴⁸, where the suspicion of a powerful staffer of parochial school is drawn toward the dismissal of a priest whom she suspects in involved in illicit sexual behavior with at student. Seemingly unwilling or unable to give any *benefit of the doubt*, the sister and principal of the school is already set on saving the program, protecting the students, and pressing for the priest’s resignation. In the heated but private moment, the two in conflict:

Priest: You have no right to act on your own. You have taken vows; obedience being one...

Sister: I will step outside the church!

Priest: You haven’t the slightest proof of anything!

Sister: But I have my certainty! And armed with that, I will go to your parish, and the one before that if necessary. I’ll find a parent.

As enough an exchange to understand that she has doubt about his behavior and he, seemingly no choice but to relent, resign, her mind made up and her will too strong, willful. Who is right? Who is wrong? The two, as they are, cannot reconcile, her belief as she believes it fact and he not able to stand, no *benefit of the doubt*.

⁵⁴⁸ From Wikipedia, ***Doubt*** is a 2008 American drama film placed in 1964 in NYC; a priest gives a homily on the nature of doubt, noting that, like faith, it can be a unifying force. Meanwhile, a strict principal nun of the church’s parish school, becomes concerned when she sees a boy pull away from the priest in the school courtyard..

“Snow job,” is merely a ruse; a deception or concealment of one's real motive, attempting to flatter or persuade, a means to an end. And in the last word of the last sentence is “persuade”, defined as: cause (someone) to do something, especially following a sustained effort.

A *snow job* is not without the appearance of white, flakes; things blinding or beautiful, depending on the rate, the wind (more for a blowhard or verbose), against the need or want to see, preferably clearly, for direction, destination versus some disruption, distractions that may land you in the ditch, destitute, even dead.

There is *snow* everywhere, for every season, rain, or shine, cold or heat, morning, or night; and the *snow* is the work (and job) of those with power, able to summon and subdue the media, politics, economics, society—and even the spiritual realm—to do their bidding, plundering along the way what liberties are left or that remains at all, every *corner of the world*. These *weather gods* are well informed and thus well supplied in every way, prepared to strive, and succeed while others starve, sacrifice, and suffer—though to listen to them, wanting to believe, you are more likely to think that they have your best interest in mind—but nothing could (or can) be further from the truth. Yet,

I feel glad I am a Christian, glad I am without allegiance to any bloc, party, or groups, except to our Judeo-Christian tradition (modified by science and common sense). God keep you all and cause you to grow.⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁹ From Wikipedia, **Carroll Quigley** as an American historian and theorist of the evolution of civilizations. He is remembered for his teaching work as a professor at Georgetown University, and for his writing about global conspiracies, in which he argued that an Anglo-American banking elite have worked together for centuries to spread certain values globally [with aims to centralize power].

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Sleep tight,**” or to sleep well, is possibly most common for parents to say their child, children, and/or “sweet dreams” or even, “don’t let the bedbugs bite,” of a bygone era.

Of another meaning using “sleep”: as *to be asleep*, not literally but figuratively, unaware, or inattentive of matters, often that pose a risk, issue, problem, possibly life-altering, threatening, lethal.

Why do we sleep? Is it a matter of choice, the metaphorical ostrich [blind(ed) to...] illustrated with *head the sand*, suggesting a fear, phobia, *out of sight, out of mind*? Still, and as the fate of the figurative ostrich goes,

Those who believe the axiom that “Ignorance is bliss” only discovered its true meaning when the bliss began to hiss.⁵⁵⁰

And *asleep*, or its extension, *to be asleep*, applies to Christianity as well; that those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ⁵⁵¹ Secondly, as another inference: to be *asleep of things about you*, or to be passive to, dispassionate of *the presence and power of God*.

Much attention is given in these days to the *woke movement*; and though not definitive or detailed, the movement has an agenda regarding race(s) that, not embraced, implies: *to be asleep*. Reportedly, the movement *draws-out* selected doubters, naysayers, or critics, invoking shame tactics, censorship, and *cancellation* aimed to disempower determined opposition and further, whether postmortem—the removal of select artifacts associated with history—or folks alive.

Where the *woke movement* is going due its nature is something to addressed further in my thinking and understanding, but what is true is it not what it purports to be, awake and righteous.

⁵⁵⁰ Kevin Ansbro.

⁵⁵¹ 1 Corinthians 15:18.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“On pins and needles,” is usually preceded with “walking...”, coinciding with anxiety over an awaited outcome or result. A student may be *walking on pins and needles* in wait for a test, the score, etc. But also, and more the point here, is the anxiety and fear prevalent in a group, such as family, when one’s presence or personality runs roughshod over others; that is, one member that demands well above or beyond..., expectably accountable and yet abusive with unchecked or unchallenged power.

A sociopath is one who sees others as impersonal objects to be manipulated to fulfill their own narcissistic needs without any regard for the hurtful consequences of their selfish actions.⁵⁵²

Such persons, personalities, create conditions of *walking on pins and needles* of other members who wonder and wait for yet another episode or outbreak of this illness; an *ill-wind* or tempest that blows in and wreaks much distress and damage on its arrival to leave lasting effects on the souls destined to endure however their way or will enables them. And,

We do not have to be mental health professionals to identify the traits of the possible sociopaths among us.⁵⁵³

And usually, as laymen’s terms, other members are treated *like a doormat*, the one as never wrong, never accountable, and certainly never confrontable—without a hailstorm to follow *the winds*.

There are only two kinds of people in this world; those who have a conscience and those who do not.

Care to comment on who is whom?

⁵⁵² R. Alan Woods, *The Journey Is the Destination: A Book of Quotes with Commentaries*.

⁵⁵³ P.A. Speers, *Type 1 Sociopath - When Difficult People Are More Than Just Difficult People*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Slip of the tongue,” is when something is said impulsively, rashly, possibly accidentally, but not well received either due to a misunderstanding, disagreement, or offense (irrespective of whether the words are fact, true or false, beneficial, or not).

A slip of the foot may injure your body, but a slip of the tongue will injure your bond.⁵⁵⁴

Such words can be unforgivable, causing a rift in relationships, without resolve—as largely due to the will of one or the other, the *slipped-tongue* and/or the injured, all intentions or appeals aside.

For *the speaking world*, this *slip of the tongue* is a constant; as words are expressed and exchanged, a *slip* is sure to happen, along with the attendant consequences of hurt, misunderstanding, any sensitivity subject to self, selfishness, and all things pertaining to persons, our minds, hearts, souls, and spirit.

Forgiveness is always *the higher road* but is perhaps *the road less taken*; one that earnestly seeks to *let go* and put the matter(s) *behind them*, irrespective or independent of whether the other is willing to *bury the hatchet*, let *bygones be bygones*, and even make amends, restoration of the relationship on some scale. And as to Scriptures and all things holy and sacred,

To err is human, to forgive, divine.⁵⁵⁵

And there is POWER and through forgiveness, no matter whether the words were a *slip* or intended, the purpose to help or to hurt—or both—or the intention(s) meaningful or malicious, caring, or cruel, benevolent, or brutal, true, or false, veracious, or fraudulent. Yes, forgiveness is powerful, power, the tongue as it is.

⁵⁵⁴ Amit Kalantri, *Wealth of Words*.

⁵⁵⁵ Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“Cat out of the bag,” as to reveal or expose, one or more “secrets” previously hidden or undisclosed. To *let the cat out of the bag* is with some level of risk, a furious and furry creature, now unleashed to claw, scratch and fight to its death if necessary.

There are many possibilities for doing just that, *cat released*. But increasingly *attempts to release...*, is met with censorship and/or a *full array* of antagonism and argument that seems capable of discounting the Scriptures as false, “theory”, the work(s) of lunatics. And,

It didn't come from the Government down. There was no dictum, no declaration, no censorship, to start with, no! Technology, mass exploitation, and minority pressure carried the trick, thank God.⁵⁵⁶

No, not the government—allegedly as a violation of our 1st Amendment—but through “other channels” that declare material, information, images, and illustrations, to be insensitive, racist, sexist, or any other, for no reason and without any particular reply, recourse, or resolution—not even the Constitution!

Domestic terrorism⁵⁵⁷ is the *next level* of the nation's War on Terrorism⁵⁵⁸, along with Bioterrorism⁵⁵⁹ that is aimed to selectively destroy the human species, planned and perpetrated.

And it is *in the bag*, yet more on terrorism to come.

⁵⁵⁶ Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*.

⁵⁵⁷ **Domestic Terrorism** is a form of terrorism in which victims “within a country are targeted by a perpetrator with the same citizenship” as the victims.

⁵⁵⁸ **“War on Terror”** refers to the ongoing military campaign led by the U.S., U.K. and their allies against organizations and regimes identified by them as a terrorist.

⁵⁵⁹ **Bioterrorism** is terrorism involving the release of toxic biological agents.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Shifting sands,” to mean figuratively that foundations are moving, presumably beyond our control, lending to the uneasiness of mild forms and the undoing of large ones, the shakes, and shifts. There is/are the seismic shifting(s) and then, again, the figurative forms; the one’s characterized often as a crisis or tragedy, and great upending and undoing of POWER, undermined, usurped.

Stone and sea are deep in life,
Two unalterable symbols of the world.
Permanence at rest,
And permanence in motion,
Participants in the power that remains.⁵⁶⁰

Yes, “...in the power that remains”, in that these shifts and shakes, can and do intensify, the frequency and the magnitude rising, the scope and scale extended, international and beyond, with power ever concentrating and centralized; that those that issue, and control commerce are far more powerful than those that make the laws. ⁵⁶¹

Further, that “The Seven Social Sin” run amok, a society riddled with “-isms”: consumerism, materialism, and nihilism, where:

Wealth without work.
Pleasure without conscience.
Knowledge without character.
Commerce without morality.
Science without humanity.
Worship without sacrifice.
Politics without principle. ⁵⁶²

And “the sins”, the *shifting sands*.

⁵⁶⁰ Stephen R. Donaldson, *The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant, the Unbeliever*.

⁵⁶¹ Attributed to Mayer A. Rothschild (1744–1812).

⁵⁶² From a sermon given by Frederick Lewis Donaldson in Westminster Abbey, London, on March 20, 1925.

“**Sea change**,” as in/with a profound, notable transformation, a *sea change* that is upon us even now; the world changing as perhaps never, willing, or able, all the seven seas changing, changed.

What's done can't be undone. How do I fit into this new world? I should have been warned, somebody should have told me. How was I to know that that sort of world wasn't going to go on forever?⁵⁶³

Can “what’s done” be undone? Do you ever wonder, question, “How do I fit...,” or feel regret or remis; “should have been warned” or should have seen it coming, “that sort of world” gone?

A *sea change* implies that things will never be the same again; that notions of “normal” allayed given the sheer POWER, the inertia, of such change(s).

There isn't anything that should ever be considered permanent, as everything is evolving or changing in some way.⁵⁶⁴

Which certainly include change(s) for the better, barring that “better” is not twisted, exploited, or eviscerated, as *Orwellian*.⁵⁶⁵

Change on such scale demands power and thus, as it stands from time and memorial, a range extending from the wicked to the well, for worse or for better, for the interest of a few or for the benefit of yet more—and especially those without power—is realizing that power(s) generally concentrate on their own interests, their initiative many fathoms below the surface, shrouded in darkness and void of the warmth necessary for better to be.

⁵⁶³ Anthony Burgess, *The Wanting Seed*.

⁵⁶⁴ Steven Redhead, *Life Is a Dance*.

⁵⁶⁵ **Orwellian** is an adjective describing a situation, idea, or societal condition that George Orwell identified as being destructive to the welfare of a free and open society (e.g., war is peace, freedom is slavery, ignorance is strength).

Pondering on points of POWER

“Skating on thin ice,” is somewhat like *shifting sands, shaky ground*, and the like; but it is possibly met with cold, penetrating water, possible hypothermia, and the floundering effort of trying to lift yourself supported by your rapidly declining strength and the slippery and cracking ice measured in inches if that.

This is an idiom, *on this ice*, and is thus a figurative expression, the elements and generally dangerous, even deadly, but at least momentarily at *razor’s edge*. But as it is, life on the planet,

Things aren’t that simple. We can’t see the future.

[Suppose that] two lives are depending on you, and you can only save one and the one you save dies anyway in the hospital the next night. But maybe if you’d saved the other person instead it would have been the same. You can’t know. And even if you could see the future and know perfectly what outcome your choices would have, there’s no such thing as a perfect choice.

And with the imperfection, the effect,

Someone’s going to get hurt. Something is going to end up less than ideal no matter what you choose.

And in the choices of children, a family,

Does having four kids make someone more important than if they only had one? ⁵⁶⁶

Is losing one child or something similarly precious, possibly irreplaceable, more painful than losing four...?

One may be closer to *razor’s edge* than realized; *on thin ice*—without really comprehending just how fragile it is—the ice-cold water that waits to zap you of all energy and see you to *the bottom* if just below the ice, a distorted image of your face still shocked by the shock, blue and breathless, adrift however admirable the fall.

⁵⁶⁶ Jerry Cole, *On Thin Ice*.

“Cold as a witch’s titty,” is a passing idiom given *the climate*; one that trigger and onslaught of outrage, however hallowing, resulting in some bad spell from a witch or some lawsuit from an organization that sees “titty” as sexist.

As witches go, more seem apt to be bad, casting spells and conjuring up all manner of spirits to *do more of the dirty deeds* for entertainment or evil—or both! Thus, withes are commonly *cold*; indifferent to both the victim(s) and the vexing, calculated and cunning but above all, malicious and malevolent, titty or no titties.

From where witches come from or where they go is of no consequence, but only their presence as *something wicked this way comes*. A biting wind, a scream or a shriek, a flyover with or without a broom; any one of these that bring a sense of impending doom. For

Good to evil seems evil.

Founded in *good*, evil is evil as the eyes see, the mind thinks, the heart feels, and the Spirit leads ⁵⁶⁷ And the latter of all these ways of perceiving is finally the Spirit that absent or nonexistent, leaves each and all inherently inclined to evil, hopeless and helpless to know good from evil, the desire good and to disdain evil—beginning with and within self, and springing forth to stand and after everything else, to still stand. And thus, then and until then,

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. ⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁶⁷ **Spirit** refers the Holy Spirit, present since the creation but endowed to Christ followers to lead in all ways. From John 16:13, But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

⁵⁶⁸ Galatians 6:9.

Pondering on points of POWER

"Shades of gray," is one previous used, here however with a different spelling, *gray* rather than *grey*, the first more here in the states and the later, in England. The choice to use this idiom twice is more a mistake on my part but, still is goes.

Yes, many shades of gray as to the actual color codes of a palette or the possibilities of some outcome, answer, or result; that every matter is *black & white*, right, or wrong, the extremes or the absolutes. And yes, the use, like the many shades or variations, is an abstract, the challenge(s) of differentiating all the possibilities that, one to another, vary by only the slightest, an undetectable difference or practically the same.

Those that hold selectively to *black & white* are not necessarily persons of principle but may prefer such a position because it serves their interest, desire, or ambition. One may hold tenaciously to the concept that "it" is either this or that, one or the other without exception, no other possibilities.

Shortly after the tragedy of 9/11, the president made a delivery of the sort, *black & white*; that either:

You (citizens, allies) are with us, or against us.⁵⁶⁹

Which seemingly leaves you (citizen and allies) but one choice: yes or no, with or against..., without so much as a grain of gray.

⁵⁶⁹ From Wikipedia, "**you are either with us, or against us**" and similar variations are used to depict situations as being polarized and to force witnesses, bystanders, or others unaligned with some form of pre-existing conflict to either become allies of the speaking party or lose favor. The implied consequence of **not joining the team** effort is to be deemed an enemy. An example is the statement of the former US President George W. Bush, who said after 9/11 at the launch of his anti-terrorism campaign in the form "Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists

“Black & white,” as compared with *shades of grey* or *gray*, is binary; with one or the other—but nothing or no one between....

Monochrome or sepia photos are something of a choice, once expressed to me by a professional photography as “showing mood”. And while the idea of strictly one or the other may not seem reasonable, the choice of an uncolored image has much appeal and favor whether *showing mood* or something more.

When you photograph people in color, you photograph their clothes. But when you photograph people in Black and white, you photograph their souls! ⁵⁷⁰

And in/by the soul can the Spirit change us—as something described previously but understood and experienced by those who receive it—given both *fruits* ⁵⁷¹ and *gifts* ⁵⁷².

The Scriptures explain that the *things of the Spirit* are only understood and discerned by the Spirit and that those without the Spirit consider such *things* as foolishness. ⁵⁷³ Whereas those with the Spirit not only discern but embrace and accept such *things*, valuing the presence of the Spirit as essential to their faith, their walk, and their growth in Christ Jesus.

What is true and still more is that the Spirit reveals the truth, separating one from the other, *black* from *white*, but also goes deeper, enabling insight and understanding of the many *shades of grey* or *gray* that part of the God’s creation, all the in-betweens that one might otherwise overlook or obfuscate in a Spiritless life.

⁵⁷⁰ Ted Grant.

⁵⁷¹ **Fruits:** love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self-control from Galatians 5: 22-23.

⁵⁷² **Gifts,** from 1 Corinthians 12: 4: there are different kinds of gifts from teaching and preaching to hospitality.

⁵⁷³ 1 Corinthians 2:14.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Strike while the iron...**,” means to *do it* now while the chance(s) seems better, probable, favorable, and opportunistic—*the iron is hot*! Said another way, “Do it now while you have the chance!”

As iron sharpens iron, so too one sharpens another,⁵⁷⁴ comes from Proverbs, and looking back, was a key verse of *Promise Keepers*⁵⁷⁵, previously described but here and now again, thinking of love and fellowship fostered during my experience. And though,

Iron can only be destroyed by rust, and rust is a slow process which is caused by the hydrogen ion from water in the environment.⁵⁷⁶

Still, iron is malleable, refined by fire, shaped, and sharpened into things whether tools or weapons, strong and reliable. And it is the making, while *iron is hot*, that much happens—or should—to shape and fashion and to refine it to its purest and perfected form.

In the resurgence (or perhaps just a continuing) of the *superheroes*, the stories, and series, is that of Iron Man⁵⁷⁷, and on a separate but similarly ascribed theme is the Ironman Triathlon⁵⁷⁸. Both possess and display POWER, though there is more to *iron* than either or both, a *marvelous* the one and mighty the other.

⁵⁷⁴ Proverbs 27:17.

⁵⁷⁵ **Promise Keepers** is a para-Christian ministry for men founded by Bill McCartney in the 1990s, conducting gatherings often at sport’s facilities.

⁵⁷⁶ Uzoma Nnadi.

⁵⁷⁷ From Wikipedia, **Ironman** is a superhero appearing in American comic books published by Marvel Comics.

⁵⁷⁸ From Wikipedia, an **Ironman Triathlons** is one of a series of long-distance triathlon races organized by the World Triathlon Corporation (WTC), consisting of a 2.4-mile (3.86 km) swim, a 112-mile (180.25 km) bicycle ride and a marathon 26.22-mile (42.20 km) run, raced in that order. It is widely considered one of the most difficult one-day sporting events in the world.

“**...Is hot**,” to finish the previous, completing the idiom: *strike while the iron is hot*, and to carry further the prospects for an of this mineral with all its association and application to POWER, strength, and the like.

In another favorite film, *Chariots of Fire* ⁵⁷⁹, much is only display of the *real-life* stories of two Olympic athletes, their lives at present and that which drives them each to excellence. For the first of the two, Eric Liddell, there is his faith in God, a reverence that is channeled on the belief and basis that it pleases God when he runs. For the second however, Harold Abrahams, the drive and determination to be the fastest man on earth is more about proving himself, *his people* scorned as a declared race.

Each of these two *strikes* and *strikes hard*; the combination of this drive, their youth, and the opportunity to compete internationally in a time of great sorrow, post-WWI—the evidence of the cost and carnage meets at least one of the two faces to face. Yet their individual spirits cannot be denied and, even as their ambitions are securitized, each runs his race(s), receiving medals with all the fanfare and fame as with the film, their stories, as an Academy Award for Best Picture, the music or soundtrack an Oscar.

The film is unique, one that captures “self-sacrifice and moral courage”, ⁵⁸⁰ with the potential to inspire us, each, to hold to our beliefs and to trust by faith as did Eric, or to push back against oppression’s stigma as did Harold; yes, to run and keep running.

⁵⁷⁹ From Wikipedia, *Chariots of Fire* is 1981 British historical drama film. It is based on the true story of two British athletes in the 1924 Olympics: Eric Liddell: a devout Scottish Christian who runs for the glory of God, and Harold Abrahams, an English Jew who runs to overcome prejudice.

⁵⁸⁰ Runner’s World, John McLaughlin, June 20, 2018.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Scapegoat**,” is one with origins from/to the Scriptures, one account of God providing a goat (caught in a thicket) to Abraham as a replacement for his only son, Isaac, a test of faith, of trust. ⁵⁸¹

It seems cruel, *this test*, considering that Isaac was Abraham’s only child and a “miracle” baby at that (both Abraham and Sarah of age beyond offspring), but it served (and serves) an understood purpose: undergirded by the reality that

...The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away... ⁵⁸²

And to follow the rest this story, and the many more to come, is to realize God’s planning, plans, of/for building of a nation and the precursor to the salvation of the Messiah, Christ Jesus. And though Christ was not a scapegoat, but more compared or referred to as “The Lamb of God”, be assured that this planning (these plans) proceeds and that God’s promises—unlike his creation—stand, firm.

While God tarries or delays..., there remains the commonly understood *scapegoat*; one who is blamed for wrongdoing and yet has little or next nothing to do with the wrong selected because they are too powerless to lodge a defense or otherwise counter the burden thrust on them. Yes, the *scapegoat* can be one or more who is powerless, sometimes referred to as “an easy target”, and yet will not truly serve the purpose of justice; the principled rule of law intended to limit POWER(s) and thereby enable *right* that renders guilt based on evidence, due process, jurisprudence without partiality.

⁵⁸¹ From Wikipedia, **Scapegoat** is one of two kid goats. As a pair, one goat was sacrificed (not a scapegoat) and the living “scapegoat” was released into the wilderness, taking with it all sins and impurities

⁵⁸² Job 1:21.

“Sheeple,” is most often heard in the context of a domineering leader, perhaps a despot, overlording *sheeple*, foolish or easily led (and misled), assumed at their own peril—and perhaps others too.

The one thing...that is truly ugly is the climate of hate and intimidation, created by a noisy few, which makes the decent majority reluctant to air in public their views on anything controversial. ... Where all pretend to be thinking alike, it's likely that no one is thinking at all. ⁵⁸³

Which is to understand that *sheeple* do not necessarily choose to be so (assumed...in actuality), but in some measures are made to do so; that whether to avoid “reality”, or to *claim the side* of “the positive”, or to *get along* or avoid rejection, ridicule or more,—no refusal, resistance, or the like.

Not to confuse *sheeple* with the illustration and parable of a *shepherd and his sheep*; for there is a real and necessary submission of *the faithful* to worship and praise, to honor and obey, to love and to forgive—but through love as intended, not by (or in) “the climate of hate and intimidation”—*the faithful* are called foremost *to love the Lord and to love their neighbor as their self*.

Still, and to press the point, *the sheeple* follow the desires and dictates of those that are chiefly driven by (and for) forces of POWER that in no way are that of love or the care of the *shepherd* that seeks out the one lost at the risk of the others. Yes, *sheeple* are *pawns*, to be *played* at great loss—though without much consideration, the costs of a comparative *many* far less than the interests of *the few* and the forces of power of which they ardently pursue and most assuredly apply to the detriment of humanity.

⁵⁸³ Edward Abbey, *Postcards from Ed: Dispatches and Salvos from an American Iconoclast*.

Pondering on points of POWER

"Sitting shotgun," is most likely from the days of the *old west* and wagons, an armed rider sitting next to the stagecoach driver as an obvious defense of/for the coach and its contents.

As I think of this image, augmented by a cowboy western or two, is the odds that this one-armed rider could or can fiend-off several bandits; that given a favorable setting, woods, water or a narrow passage, the wagon would not stand a chance of *making it* faced or fronted by several....

What seems the idea of *sitting shotgun* is possibly more of the presence that the possible protection, the *real deal* of essentially a *one-man band* (though the impact a shotgun in a high-speed chase might increase the chances, shifting some POWER in favor of the stagecoach).

What was likely preferred *back in the day* as trips go, was a relatively uneventful experience; the wagon departs...and the wagon arrives, and everyone, team, and passengers, is where they intended to be, alive and reasonably well; one where

A stagecoach passed by on the road and went on, [and] the road didn't become more beautiful or even more ugly.

[And this is] human action on the outside world, [where] we take nothing away and we put nothing back, we pass by and we forget, [and] the sun is always punctual every day.⁵⁸⁴

But even with a skilled, seasoned *sidekick sitting shotgun*, not everyone—or anyone—arrives or arrived; no, what became of the stagecoach is not always known or understood but only that such "possible protection" is (or was) not enough for the possibilities that became realities, bandits, or no bandits, but risks *uglier* than some considered, possibly created, or caused.

⁵⁸⁴ Alberto Caeiro, *The Keeper of Sheep*.

“**Son of a gun**,” is on scale with “at a boy,” or “good going,” (as meaningful, not sarcastic), or possibly, “that’s get-ten it done,” as a phrase of praise, congratulatory and commending.

In a book carrying the same, Justin St. Germain ⁵⁸⁵ writes: “So I did what any English major would: I quoted someone else.” And though no English major, I am doing much of this, the quotes drawn largely from *goodreads*, ⁵⁸⁶ and a small collection of books personally acquired, relevant to the general subject of interest, POWER, force, and much as my mind might put to words.

To consider that someone, anyone, might express similar enthusiasm about this collection is *beyond the purpose* as initially expressed both in the book’s cover and introduction. First and foremost is my *pondering on power* and with that, all variety of notions and ideas bolstered by selective quotes, all developed page by page, intended as another journey in my learning, knowing and possibly understanding.... For,

Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves. ⁵⁸⁷

And given the certainty that anyone is hypocrite at some time and place, my understanding should account for the abuse(s) of power that I have done (or do) foremost, but then also and certain: that *absolute or unchecked power corrupts absolutely*, as Lord Acton is credited, and that where such power exist so too does corruption, layer on layer, as I’ll be a *son of a gun*.

⁵⁸⁵ From *goodreads*, **Justin St. Germain’s Son of a Gun: A Memoir**; a stunning memoir of a mother-son relationship that is also the searing, unflinching account of a murder and its aftermath.

⁵⁸⁶ **Goodreads** includes countless quotes on featured books, authors and writers of all kinds.

⁵⁸⁷ Carl Jung.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Smell something...**’ might be as, “I smell a fish,” or “Something is rotten in Denmark,” or simply, “Something stinks!”

In a film already cited, *Glory*, a central character played by Denzel Washington, uses a similar phrase to describe the war (American Civil War), when he says,

It stinks, it stinks bad—and we’re all covered-up in it, ain’t none of us clean.

And it seems, continuing in the vein of the last page, that corruption is not only caustic but also contagious, spreading from the highest to the lowest, ensuring that the greatest achieve or abscond more while “the lesser” even less.

In his book, *The Wish for Kings*, Lewis Lapham ⁵⁸⁸describes the opulence of Washington, an oligarchy, as *an insider*; and elsewhere, , he says,

The American ideal exists as a concept in motion, as a fugitive and ill-defined hope glimmering on a horizon. No coalition, no industry, no source of wealth lasts much longer than a generation, and nobody dies in the country in which he was born.

As it were, the time (timing) of a much younger nation.

But for *today*, and the country as it is and still is becoming, *the lesser* continue on a trajectory of less—made so by what Jimmy Carter deemed, “No longer a functioning democracy”, but gilded once again, a land of more of *the less* with more and more for a relative few; a land of fiefdoms that *smell of money* as a failing love, *the root of all evil* that *we’re all covered-up in*.

⁵⁸⁸ From Wikipedia, **Lewis Henry Lapham** is an American writer. He was the editor of the American monthly Harper's Magazine from 1976 until 1981, and from 1983 until 2006. He is the founder of Lapham's Quarterly, a quarterly publication about history and literature, and has written numerous books on politics and current affairs

“...**Fishy**,” to add to *smell*, something suspect where *there is more than meets the eye* or one’s reality is not on par with another, the two different and perhaps “diametrically opposed”.

And to return to the previous page, the script from the film, *Glory*, is the idea, observation or opinion, that “we’re all covered-up in it,” is not necessarily shared by all; that even among a relative few, one or more may be in denial, unwilling or unable to consider *their* part, whether corrupt or corrupted, the cause or a casualty, but to the extreme, are innocent. Yet,

Innocence is a kind of insanity.⁵⁸⁹

As one possible exception, children, the rest of us are *caught up in it*, and it *stinks*, whatever else thought or however *fishy* my observation and opinion.

Where *the smell* started, where it is going or has gone, and for how long it will go on, is connected to the Lord Acton’s credits; that unchecked POWER moves to the absolute(s) and thus corruption, less *fishy* or suspect, and more certain and concrete—that *stink to high heaven*—as our debt accrues to historical levels and this next gilded age presses on.

Money is like fire, an element as little troubled by morality as earth, air, and water. Men can employ it as a tool, or they can dance around it as if it were the incarnation of a god.... It acquires its meaning from the uses to which it is put.⁵⁹⁰

And it covers the landscape, as money changes hands and it often flows whether as a stream of cash or a line of credit, and where it eventually takes us, parched, and plundered, is finally our *fishy to fry*.

⁵⁸⁹ Graham Greene, *The Quiet American*.

⁵⁹⁰ Lewis Lapham.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Self-made man,” is marveled to be, well, largely responsible for his or their success. In truth, as life does make it, no one is *self-made*.

The truth is - no matter how “self-made” you think you are, you are really made by many who have invested in your life.

Be known as a thankful and grateful person... and be known as the person that is investing in others to build them up, as well. It’s your way of paying back the debt that others have invested in you.⁵⁹¹

It sounds good, *self-made*, as something on par with *David and Goliath* or the popular theme of rising (up) out of anonymity, a *rag to riches* story, one who goes *from zero to hero*. And yet such possibilities are ours to pursue, admire and respect, if just left to our imagination or some magical thinking. Yes, the singular idea, the undaunted will, to *get it*—whatever *it is*, whoever it might just belong to, elsewhere among everybody and everything, yours to win.

Can one be self-made by *hook or crook*, by lying, cheating, and stealing? Yes, of course, for the methods and means are not always made available or, if even confirmed, and are of little consideration given expedience where *the end justifies the means....*

Some might hold that our land is the richest in the world; one of unmatched POWER, liberty and freedom, no matter how unchecked their ideas or beliefs, farfetched their thinking—and lack therein.

In truth, none of us are *self-made* or otherwise *the master of our destiny*; no, on the contrary, we have and do depend on others to provide help, even hope, in a land far from rich—in the earnest since—with liberty and freedom under siege from power gone awry, that lies, cheats, and steals with impunity, deceiving and deceived.

⁵⁹¹ Josh Hatcher, *Manhood: The 12 Pillars of Masculinity*.

“**Momma’s boy**,” or “mama’s boy” is described as one who compares all women (relations) to his mother regardless of his opinion(s) of or attitude toward his *mama*. In this comparison, no woman evidently *has a chance* given the man(boy) is deeply disturbed, the pains *of yesterday* always present, all distrust at the younger age(s) unjustly dispensed, broadly applied.

Given the above as most applied or associated, still, there are others that, justified or not, serve to add yet another profile to men, manhood, masculinity, or the male of the species. And taking it further is the derogatory and discriminate public opinion(s) as displayed in the media and elsewhere, developed over several decades but underhandedly aimed to undermine the male, man.

Some might say, “It’s well deserved (these views...)” in that men have generally *failed to launch* or have degraded into the *man-child*, delaying or forgoing marriage and the accompanying maturity to *start a family* or even pursue “real goals”; as in some way as Peter Pan,⁵⁹² a boy who refuses to “grow-up”, their emotional and social standing stunted, intentional, or not, delayed and debasing.

But as to whole of it, and what is (and has been) happening to the male is instrumental to the weakening of society. If/as the state draws its POWER from society—passionate about power—does it make sense that the state desires the dilution of male power and more broadly societal strength? First the male and then the traditional family is a primary target of the state, destroying all semblance of societal strength while carving up the spoils, as the veritable Captain Hook, driven to destroy Peter Pan, *momma* or not.

⁵⁹² From Wikipedia, **Peter Pan** portrays a never-ending boyhood as the leader of the Lost Boys, interacting with fairies, pirates, mermaids, Native Americans, and occasionally ordinary children from the world outside Neverland.

“Sealed with a kiss,” is a reminder of a ‘60s song by the same title, first sung by the Four Voices, later by Jason Donovan.⁵⁹³ A song of mixed meaning; one, the sadness of departure, the *endless Summer* over, and the other of promises, “a pledge”, to meet “in September, sealed with a kiss,” left to the imagination of *puppy love*.

Love is a beautiful thing, purposeful and POWER, as it first arrives to the scene, often in childhood, but further on to romance, courtship and sometimes, marriage. Yes, love is....

Carrying on from the last page, “Momma’s boy”, is this necessary part of every person’s growth and maturity, the ability to love and to be loved—not to be confused with sex that, sadly, has become the insufficient substitute for the otherwise potential and promise.

More than love (if there is such a thing), is that of trust or, as committed in the song, a promise *sealed with a kiss*—though untested in the passage of time, the possibility that two will never meet in September or again as promises made and broken—trust less so, perhaps, if it ever was given a chance, a choice.

Yes, love is *a nirvana*, but trust is necessary regardless of the relations, family, friend or any other of value and worth. But when, or as, such trust is not nurtured between a parent and child, there is *no room* or opportunity for love to grow, to flourish. And left to itself, love absent trust is merely a platitude or pleasantry; a word to use when you want something strictly for you—not for them, for us, or anybody else. The maturing male must trust—must find someone or something that deserves his trust—before he can sacrifice himself in the name and purpose of love, mother, momma or not.

⁵⁹³ From Wikipedia, the lyrics are from the point of view of one of two lovers who have had to part ways over the summer. The narrator promises the lover who has had to leave that he will send his love and dreams in daily letters “sealed with a kiss”.

“Kiss of death,” is a less desirable form—unless you want to die—and suggest with emphasis some association that which ultimately causes ruin, foreordained, or predestined.

Returning to a favorite film, *The Princess Bride* ⁵⁹⁴, there is point in the story where Westley, “the farm boy”, is now “the dreaded pirate Roberts”, disguised in mask, dressed in black.

Not by chance or fate, the *now-princess* and *once-farm-boy* are reunited and after some heated exchange, more resentment regarding her thought of her Westley’s death by this pirate, she is suddenly aware that the pirate and Westley are one in the same when he recites, “As you wish”, while tumbling down a hill. Yes, those words triggered this awareness, his true identify and further, his commitment to her, to them, rooted in the fawning on the farm, his devotion to her in words but more, in action. But not so quick, so simple, is the relationship restored, for in this encounter is *his own side*; that she has been “unfaithful” in her commitment to him, to them, *selling out* to the likes of the *odious Prince Humperdinck*, an “arranged marriage”. And each confronting the other, the passion is hardly love—not trust to consider—until she alas realizes...while he falls to some possible peril. Just before his fall however, she says, “I died that day,” referring to the news of her lover’s apparent death.

Love is truly about death, with or without a kiss, in that the maturing male must trust and thus must endure what Westley has experienced and now conveys, the cruelty and unjustness of life, mask or no mask, *momma* or no *momma*—as trust matters most.

⁵⁹⁴ From Wikipedia, *The Princess Bride* is adapted from a novel (1973) by the same name, and tells of a story of a farmhand named Westley, accompanied by companions befriended along the way, who must rescue his true love Princess Buttercup from the odious Prince Humperdinck.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Slap on the wrist,” is understood to be minor punishment on scale; something more than chiding and less than a paddling, often associated to school discipline of a bygone era. As idioms go, this one thus has both a literal and figurative application, the actual discipline, and the association, often as cynicism and opinion, that “the punishment” did or does not fit “the crime”.

One does not have to *look too far* to consider crimes that go unpunished or sentences too severe—often if not always based on the POWER of the defense that, in the extremes, is essentially acquitted if ever an actual case—or at the other end, the millions who *plead*, coerced to effectively confess guilt irrespective of *due process* and the presumed protections of/for the accused, *The 5th....*

One does not have to *face* the prospect of *an unjust world* when, with a mere modicum of attention, can observe it firsthand from the local to national courts—a nation whose decline is marked by growing injustice and a failed system designed to punish—not to render justice—metering out services to the highest bidder.

There is no greater tyranny than that which is perpetrated under the shield of the law and in the name of justice.⁵⁹⁵

Yes, the courts appear regal, often architecturally adorned, the “ideas” of justice inscribed, embossed, and expressed—giving a multi-faceted appearance and perception of justice served. But in fact, *the system* does not practice *due process* and is therefore decoupled of/from actual justice, *the rule of law*⁵⁹⁶ or any other aspects that might suggest that any integrity, impartiality.

⁵⁹⁵ Charles-Louis de Secondat, baron de la Brède et de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*.

⁵⁹⁶ ***Due process*** is simply fair treatment and ***the rule of law***, the restriction of arbitrary use(s) of power.

“Slap the shit out...” is one less said/used, but carries much more actual pain than *a slap on the wrist* probably best left as a threat, not action, reaction. If/as it does *go that far* however, *the slapped* may not actually *lose their bowels* but will likely *hurt like hell* whether from humiliation, harm, or both. And when one says to another, “I going to slap the shit out of you,” the possibilities still prevail; that is, *the one* might have no intention of doing it while, on the other, to proceed with or without a warning. And again, *the other* is either apt to give it attention or, if not, to risk further reprisal, the hand, open or curled, *laying a* whopping, whipping, or walloping, from words to actions, or as expressed by Stephen King, “Oh shit, it’s shit.”

And speaking of *shit*, is one able to *see shit* when *shit is happening* more often—as *in your face* or, to go back to *Glory*, to be *covered-up in it...and it stinks bad*? Oh yes, one can *talk shit* too, saying something that seems strong or straight but finally and always is mere refuse, excrement, #2—the words not worth repeating let alone said at all. And shit, *shit* is everywhere!

One of the few times in a man’s life when he is not full of shit!
The morning of a colonoscopy. Enough said!⁵⁹⁷

And even as

The world is full of shit, inestimable horrible shit,

And yet, the maturing man

...transcends from it by creatively making [life] meaningful, purposeful, and, as much as possible, sublimely beautiful.⁵⁹⁸

⁵⁹⁷ Jim Lawrence.

⁵⁹⁸ Danny Castellones Sillada.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Sick as a dog**,” means simply to be ill, most likely nauseated with other symptoms and reactions to follow. When one is *sick as a dog*, they feel like *shit*.

But *feeling like shit* is not strictly due sickness; indeed, one can be treated like shit and in this..., take on this feeling—even a self-image—as *shit*, momma or not. When/as such treatment occurs—often unwarranted or even cruel—it can *crush* a child, their feelings and whole self-image. Words and actions as unnecessary and even cruel, are one side of the *shit* while the other might be neglect or indifference, offering no acknowledgement here or there. Yes, *the shit* comes in different forms but finally does more harm than good—if any good was ever the plan or purpose.

And still, to *add insult to injury*, is that *shit* may remain silent, with or without an audience, due to shame, guilt, or both—not discounting a glib response or other expression of convenience. But still, the maturing man is able, enabled, to see through this, to let go the shame and to forgive any indifference, cruel as it be, taking on a challenge and charter that says, “I can trust—and I must trust—if ever to love and to be loved,” as described by a

Tenderness [that] emerges from the fact that the two persons, longing, as all individuals do, to overcome the separateness and isolation to which we are all heir because we are individuals....

Against an,

...inward life [that] dries up, when feeling decreases and apathy increases, when one cannot affect or even genuinely touch another person, [and] violence flares up...⁵⁹⁹

Against others and against ourselves, carrying on the legacy of all lacking..., those *before us* or still with us, if just the memory.

⁵⁹⁹ Rollo May, *Love and Will*.

“Dog tired,” as to mean exhausted or exasperated, beaten *down* and possibly *fed-up*, as once again the literal and figurative, *dog tired* in the physical or the emotional, the personal.

The maturing man certainly knows *dog tired*; they know about *sweat and equity*, struggle and sacrifice, reward and punishment, justice and injustice, love, and indifference and finally, trust both made and broken; yes, all these things that happens when/as *one puts away*, or at least *puts down*, the childlike....⁶⁰⁰ And,

...when men at last accept the fact that they cannot successfully lie to themselves, and at last learn to take themselves seriously, they discover previously unknown and often remarkable recuperative powers within themselves.⁶⁰¹

But it is *trust*, trusting, that make *the uncovered* exposed and evident, and reveals *the truth* however painful or pleasurable it be, to discover foremost that

...the impoverishment of our contemporary culture [is] the popular—though profoundly mistaken—definition of myth as falsehood.

Taking a first necessary courageous step away from, the lies told and retold, created and constructed to reduce--and not raise—a man to be *a man* (versus one delayed, deterred and deceived as more an addle child stuck in dependence, irresponsible and afraid).

The character of Benjamin Martin in *The Patriot* had it right when he said, “A legislature can crush a man’s rights just as easily as a king,” but beyond and before that, will crush anyone and everyone that potentially or practically stands between them and POWER, and thus must stop the man from maturing, the family from forming.

⁶⁰⁰ Referring to 1 Corinthians

⁶⁰¹ Rollo May, *Man's Search for Himself*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Stir up a hornet’s nest,” is to make trouble, often by exposing a problem, causing fury, as with disturbed hornets, with stings to follow if not a maelstrom of malevolence. As one story, a chance of exposing a problem or even just alluding to it, is *the hornet’s nest*; the potential danger on a scale fitting for Orwell, referenced to Nazism or some other despotic forms, when *dirty secrets* are revealed. And if one fails to follow a singular discourse of “the story” what becomes of them may be much more than *shit*. Such persons, however well intended and justified, can lose their lives in effect; incarcerated without charges, a dissident not worthy of *due process*.

What is most important in news is perception—not reality—which is fitting for a monolithic form of media, selling *shit* to the masses that, in the sheer volume and singular voice, accepts or acquiesces, *hammered*, and *unhinged* by hype, hysteria, hullabaloo.

And *the story* goes unchecked, unchallenged, the *soft force* of controlled media that

Like any other matter of public consumption, bullshit is meant primarily to satisfy the hunger of its manufacturer...for you [must] believe in your own delusion [] to make people have a share in it.⁶⁰²

And as to *the truth*, or more *the facts*, can one really trust in such “news” knowing of the intentions, the plan and purpose, the delusions, deception, and distraction? For always,

Propaganda is where a demagogue plays pedagogue and starts a monologue to leave their audience agog.⁶⁰³

And even a *half truth* is still a lie, *the hornet’s nest stirred*, and *the sting* of censorship and its incarceration abuzz.

⁶⁰² Lamine Pearlheart, *To Life from the Shadows*.

⁶⁰³ Stewart Stafford.

“Busy as a bee,” means very busy, whether making honey or anything else, but busy just the same.

In a favorite British series, *Foyle’s War* ⁶⁰⁴, there is an episode where a suspect, indeed a convicted burglar, hides a stolen valuable in a beehive, telling his sister during a confrontation, that he is trusting this undisclosed item to “Busy friends.” And as it turns-out, the plot, the item, possessing much gold, is highly valued—which is why he conceals it so cleverly (though still *found out* and murdered by the previous owner). But more to this story is that item was stolen by “the previous owner”; a gift smuggled through channels, linked to a family in the domain of Germany, one of many assets seized by the Nazis during the mass incarceration.

Again, and as the murder unfolds, the burglar is discovered and consequently dealt with by the son of a corporation, one doing business with the Nazis—violating war-time law punishable with treason, execution. Although, as it turns out, the corporate head has *worked out a deal* with authorities that essentially give his company a *green light* to carry on this business arrangement. As to his son however, steeped in Nazism, murder is not an exemption, the son arrested and the father distraught by a combination of bad news and misfortune, commits suicide. And while there is much more in the story, the interworking of lives, what seems to shine is that those who are corrupt are eventually found out, any agreement of business and government apparently *not above and beneath* justice—but such stories continue on and on, the POWERS that can and do evade punishment, placing profits above all else and the expense of more than is or can be considered, greed and graft *busy as a bee*.

⁶⁰⁴ From Wikipedia, *Foyle’s War* is British detective drama television series set during (and shortly after) the Second World War. The featured episode was entitled “War Games”.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Sit tight**,” means to wait or standby...to refrain, or to be patient, with some possible benefit(s) to waiting, watching and preferably with worrying or, *heaven forbid*, having an anxiety attack. And yet,

Anxiety has a purpose...the occasions for anxiety are very different—we are afraid of losing out in the competition, feeling unwanted, isolated, and ostracized.

But the purpose of anxiety is still to protect us from dangers that threaten the same things: our existence or values that we identify with our existence. This normal anxiety of life cannot be avoided except at the price of apathy or the numbing of one's sensibilities and imagination.⁶⁰⁵

And not to contradict someone so well educated and learned, but can it also be possible to experience a peace rather than anxiety, a calmness rather than constant worry and fear that can/does limit thinking and further, action?

To consider conditions where fear may be the desirable response or outcome, described previously in the case of social engineering, conditioning, and controlling persons, populations, the distinction of *fear* and *anxiety* is:

A fear is a reaction to a specific danger, to which the individual can make a specific adjustment. But what characterizes anxiety is the feeling of diffuseness and uncertainty and the experience of helplessness toward the threat.

And while “diffuseness and uncertainty” is certain, present, and perceptible whether we *sit tight*, take flight, or choose to fight, or react in any other way; still, the maturing man must learn to trust beyond man, putting his faith in something above and beyond himself, as promising and permanent, perfected in all measure.

⁶⁰⁵ Rollo May, *The Meaning of Anxiety*.

“Stay loose,” is like *sit tight*, but to give it its due, is to remain calm, composed, but prepared for the challenge ahead.

One might say to another, as a mutual benefit: “Stay loose, and we’ll take care of this. Trust me.” And while it’s possible that the one does not really have “a plan” or any *solid* solution, presuming some problem afoot, they are trying to create or foster calm, confidence, and/or courage in the face of potential danger (as a parent may comfort a child or their children for any possible concerns).

But there are those that prefer to *stir the pot*—going so far as creating a “crisis” for a any number of reasons, but foremost in/with the deep desire to control, possibly purposed to create confusion and chaos, bedlam. And such... can/do make a habit—a lifestyle—of such practices ranging from personal ploys to purposed pandemonium of the public to the point that it is more than predictable but is as certain as the thunder that follows lightning, the North Star or as the next sunrise. And to use yet another idiom, expressed as “I smell a rat,” is that such persons (one or more) are deeply disturbed, possibly psychotic, but driven by/with an “opportunity” of such making, manipulation, and malcontent. They live for such purposes, causing undue and unwarranted pains and punishment, exploiting trust, and subsequently destroying relationships unabashedly, but more often, with a sense of glee, gladness, absent any guilt of the costs and consequences. Such characters will go so far as to play “the victim” when in fact they are knowingly *the villain*: the perpetrator of ploys of POWER; *pulling the strings* of sympathy or *playing the hand* that bluffs others to *do their bidding at their beckoned call*—or until such time that other players lose heart, fold and walk away, exhausted by an inextinguishable *fire* of burning and to burn bridges and more.

Do you prefer to *stay loose* with trust or to face such a *fire*, such fury, without *a drop* of trust, *no water in the well*?

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Smell a rat**,” as already introduced on the prior page, means to suspect something awry, not right, possibly sinister, insidious. Sometimes the smell is foul and acrid, evident of not just the condition but also those responsible, perhaps criminal. There may not be *the writing on the wall*, but *the fingerprints* remain as irrefutable evidence, a strong suspension if not *clear-cut* case.

But then comes the POWER of alleged or accused *with privilege* to *skirt justice*, arrive *free & clear*—possibly even rewarded—far and away *above the law* and beyond the sphere of any jurisdiction(s). Many will fall under the trappings of the plea bargain, but for those of sufficient power, there is no accountability or implication, not any possibility or outcome except immunity, release, or acquittal.

The bankers and financiers are badly overplaying their hands, again, and people are starting to catch on to the scam.⁶⁰⁶

But what became of them, the bankers, is a fine example of *the power* that, referred to as “to big to jail, too big to fail,” were rewarded with government bailouts.⁶⁰⁷ And though there be much more to this, beyond my understanding, what can be deduced is that banks took enormous risks rendering unimaginable financial gains in the short-term but ultimately producing monumental losses—only to be seemingly resolved through government bailouts, rewarding rather than punishing those responsible, as power does provide.

⁶⁰⁶ Chris Martenson.

⁶⁰⁷ From Wikipedia, **quantitative easing** is a monetary policy whereby a central bank purchases at scale government bonds or other financial assets in order to inject money into the economy to expand economic activity. **Too big to fail (TBTF)** is a theory in banking and finance that asserts that certain corporations, particularly financial institutions, are so large and so interconnected that their failure would be disastrous to the greater economic system, and that they therefore must be supported by governments when they face potential failure.

“Quiet as a mouse,” is just as it sounds, though I’ve heard mice scurrying around or maybe a rat, *the smell* as the sign. And if the smell be pungent and putrid then possibly a big, gnarly rat as big those depicted in *The Princess Bride*, the *Fire Swamp*, or more likely, bankers that cannot be busted let alone blamed.

And as these words are written still another book of influence, relevance and right: *The Age of Acquiescence* ⁶⁰⁸, that outlays an American history of two “gilded ages”; the first as the industrial age and the second, still going and growing, in this age of financing.

The second, our own, which began sometime during the Reagan era and lasted through the financial meltdown of 2008, like the original, earned a reputation for extravagant self-indulgence by the rich and famous and for a similar political system of, by, and for the moneyed.

...

We think of the last third of the 19th century as a time of great accomplishment.... (inventory, industry, etc.)

...

But [] times have changed profoundly. Gone missing were [are] the insurrections and all those utopian longings for *a world* put together differently to escape the ravages of industrial capitalism.

And there is much more reading ahead, what one believes about changes and the apparent differences in public response to growing income and wealth disparity, to effects of unprecedented public and private debt, and to the vanishing notions of *the American dream* or anything remotely like it. Yes, times changed and continue to change at a pace as to wonder how long it can continue before the rats scurry and the stench is swallowed-up by *the sinking ship*.

⁶⁰⁸ *The Age of Acquiescence*, Steve Fraser, 2015.

Pondering on points of POWER

"Spitting image," means practically identical, so close as to scarcely be able to distinguish one from the other.

Continuing from the pages of same book, *The Age of Acquiescence*, Fraser adds to the comparison of the two gilded ages, essentially the same formal geography but still, "two nations".

...one on the rise (the industrial...), a developing country, [and] one in decay, becoming an underdeveloped country.

And in more detail, *the now* as:

An economy kept aloft by finance and mass consumption has for a long time rested on the ethos of immediate gratification, enjoyed a love affair with debt, speculation and risk, erased the distinction between productive labor and pursuits once upon a time judged parasitic....

Which is to support the claim, as described, of "becoming an underdeveloped country".

If we, the nation, was but one person looking at their own reflection in a mirror, what would they see? If the mirror was (is) *true to form*, they would see a reality of one *ridden hard and burned-out*—not necessarily because of hard work but more so because of their pursuits of the notion, *the American dream*, and the paradox: the more we get, the more we want, and then, the more we keep getting, the more we keep wanting; consumerism consuming us.

But often is, the mirror is not true to form and therefore reflects a distorted image, an illusion, as in *a house of mirrors*; and as such, the one person sees themselves as perhaps someone respectable and respected, *doing the right thing*, and living a fulfilling and meaningful life, possibly *on-track* for some piece or part of *the American dream*.

The all-consuming selves we take for granted today are "merely empty receptacles of desire." Infinitely plastic and decentered, the modern citizen of the republic of consumption lives on slippery terrain, journeying to nowhere in particular.

“Chip off the old...,” is usually if not always closed with “...block”, to mean or insinuate that an offspring is like his father, one practically (as) the other.

If we are to take Steve Fraser’s claims to heart, folks around this gilded age are simply not the same as before; that whereas they opposed and openly protested the income and wealth disparity, we are more apt to, well, acquiesce. And to this, he writes:

Betrayed and abandoned, cut adrift or superannuated, coerced or manipulated, speeded up, cheated, living in the shadows—this is a recipe for acquiescence.

Concentration on “coerced and manipulated” seems to suggest that those previous generations were not easily *sold*, controlled, or compelled into accepting status quo; that they could not and would not continue a course of increased and intensified poverty while a relative few progressed *beyond one’s wildest dreams*, wielding their POWERS to take everything, the *bottom-out* of much of the populous.

Poverty or the underclass(es) is nothing as that first age or this age, the developing nation and the one now in unrecoverable decline; as with the experience and writing of Michael Harrington, author of *The Other America, Poverty in the United States* ⁶⁰⁹. And I can believe that, on reading the footnotes below or having some knowledge of the author, there is reservation, caution, even consternation, given his socialist advocacy, alignment, against many that view even the mention as *a clear and present danger*—let alone any alternatives to our present course, a *chip off the old block*.

⁶⁰⁹ From Wikipedia, *The Other America* is Michael Harrington's best known and likely most influential book. He was an American democratic socialist, writer, political activist, political theorist, professor of political science, radio commentator, and founding member of the Democratic Socialists of America.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Stone’s throw**,” to mean that something, possibly an outcome or result, is very closer, near, and likely.

Without pretending to be a futurist, prognosticator, or anything similar, I am convinced that our land is on the cusp of some form of revolution: not the kind that is often the *go-to* in the mention of the word, *revolution*, but radical changes that are (and will) irreparably disrupt life and living for the vast majority; those who continue to struggle as well as ever increasing segment that, as Barbara Ehrenreich⁶¹⁰ writes, are experiencing *fears of falling* as an increasing reality. Indeed, her description is (was) prescient, describing the “roots” of the middle class as portending of what is *happening before our eyes*; those persons are increasingly *losing their place* in the scales of economy, opportunity, and privilege.

On this score, the declining middle class, is described once more in a book and subsequent film; one that follows the lives of once homeowners now displaced for one or more hardships and adverse changes, adding to the figures of those living a nomadic life. Both the book ⁶¹¹ and film present the lives of a couple of folks, a personal profile and small sampling of largely older folks, not yet and perhaps never to retire, living but a *stone’s throw* from insufficiency.

⁶¹⁰ Published in 1990. ***Fear of Falling: The Inner Life of the Middle Class*** examines the insecurities of the middle class in an attempt to explain its turn to the right during the past two decades, “Fear of Falling” traces the myths about the middle class to their roots in the ambitions and anxieties that torment the group and that have led to its retreat from a responsible leadership.

⁶¹¹ From Wikipedia, the book: ***Nomadland: Surviving America in the Twenty-First Century***, is a 2017 nonfiction book by American journalist Jessica Bruder about the phenomenon of older Americans who, following the Great Recession from 2007 to 2009. The book was made into a film in 2020.

“Throw stones,” is, going back to times of *stoning*—or to be *stoned*⁶¹²—the idea here, coupled with *glass walls* or *houses*, all of which imply or insinuate hypocrisy.

Yes, hypocrisy is real, reality, for each and all of us; and that at any time, we “conveniently forget” our individual conduct while, hypocritically holding others to the same—for even less....

I hope you have not been leading a double life, pretending to be wicked and being good all the time. That would be hypocrisy.⁶¹³

Which is of course the less likely; that the *road more traveled* is one that pretends to be good—even *saintly*—while *living like the devil*.

Again, if it were possible to reduce us to a single person peering at their reflection in *that mirror*, what would they see, believe, accept? That, given the intoxicating effects of POWER, what or how does our nation present itself, pose and posture our conduct internationally or—much closer *to home*—toward its citizens?

For the powerful, crimes are those that others commit.⁶¹⁴

But not us.

Pressing the point that any nation engaged in continuous conflict abroad will be unable or unwilling to maintain liberty at home.,⁶¹⁵ what becomes of our supposed *way of life* but to eventually be swept-up and among the very terrorists that we pretend not to be, *too good for our britches*, too bold or too bad to conceive our own reflection for what it is, what is has become and where it is going.

⁶¹² **Stoned** (*stoning*); as in the practice of a public punishment (e.g. the woman was to be stoned in the Scriptures allegedly for adultery).

⁶¹³ Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

⁶¹⁴ Noam Chomsky, *Imperial Ambitions: Conversations on the Post-9/11 World*.

⁶¹⁵ James Madison.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Hard as a rock,” to mean just that..., though the context often pertains to someone’s head (mind), body and general mentality; that like a promise as *hard as Oak*, so too persons; resilient, resolute, etc.

But hypocrisy (as first addressed on the previous page) does not fit that form; it is not *rock solid* but on the contrary is elusive, evasive, and often eerily unable to *put its money where its mouth is*; nevertheless, able to *get away with its* due POWER of one form or another, overt and covert, internal and among its “allies”. Yet,

All through history, one may observe the tendency of power to destroy its very *raison d’être* (the most important reason or purpose for someone or something’s existence).

And though it aims and possibly achieves internal unity and external defenses, still,

...it grows to such proportions hat it destroys the social peace of the state by the animosities which its exaltations arouse, and it enervates the sentiment of patriotism by robbing the common man of the basic privileges which might bond him to the nation.

And in *robbing...the common man*,

The poor folk go to war to fight and die for the delights, riches, and superfluities of others...and in the long run, these pretensions are revealed, and the sentiment of patriotism is throttled in the breast of the disinherited. ⁶¹⁶

Which is an extended way of saying that the great lies are found out, *the king has no clothes*, it’s all a racket. ⁶¹⁷

Once power is obtained, however the method or means, it can alter individuals and their institutions, to the degree of a self-proclaimed deity, their will and want as *hard as a rock*.

⁶¹⁶ Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*.

⁶¹⁷ Referring to Smedley Butlers, *War is a Racket*.

“Rock solid,” is somewhat like *hard as a rock*, though it usually means strong, sure, stable, or secure, perhaps virtuous, and not strictly strong willed or stubborn beyond reason or rationale.

Rock solid generally implies nothing but the best; that whatever it is or portends to, it can be counted or relied on. A married person might say, “My marriage is rock solid,” to mean that they are certain of it, always and forever. Similarly, another may say that their stock portfolio or other forms of investments are *rock solid*, delivering on the stated or expected yield, performance, dividends, and growth.

Once again is the book, *Nomadland*, where some that once believed in *rock solid*, or least having much more, are now *on the other end of the stick, down and out*, or worst of all, hating themselves; embittered, angry, and disgusted—as though they live, what’s left of it, are the worst that life can be.

America is the wealthiest nation on Earth, but its people are mainly poor, and poor Americans are urged to hate themselves... Every other nation has folk traditions of men who were poor but extremely wise and virtuous, and therefore more estimable than anyone with POWER and gold. No such tales are told by the American poor. They mock themselves and glorify their betters.

And things are different, downgraded, potentially if not now among

A deepening class divide [that] makes social mobility all but impossible. The result is a de facto caste system [that] is not only morally wrong but also tremendously wasteful. Denying access to opportunity for large segments of the population means throwing away vast reserves of talent and brainpower. It’s also been shown to dampen economic growth.

And yet, it is happening at a rate not since The Great Depression; and what’s most concerning is folks—as *rock solid* as they resound, their securities—pale in comparison to the those of generations past who were as *hard as a rock* with a will to survive *light years ahead* of those of us today, weak, unsure, unstable, and unvirtuous.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Sell them out,” or *sold-out, sold down the river*, and its like, is simply to betray, to abandon—the opposite or antithesis of *rock solid* when it comes to reliability, accountability or just ability.

Citizens should know that the POWERS that be are aimed to *sell them out*; that among the matters of life and living, that all the public debt is underwritten by *national treasures*, both public and private. Given reason to consider this liability, to accept that when/as the largest debt of any nation on earth must eventually be *called-in*, is to realize that *collections* will figuratively come to every door.

Sneaky and underhanded, the Federal Reserve has been sucking the life blood out of the United States since 1913. Like a black widow spider, it weaves a web of corruption and deceit. Unknown to its prey, the FED's bite is poisonous, deep, long-lasting and brings financial upheaval and misery....⁶¹⁸

And, as a private institution and chief creditor, the FED owns the equivalent of incalculable credit accrued.

It is more than hypocrisy when students are held rigidly to their student debts, often initialed while still teens, and the largest underwriter of student debt outright ignores its debt, failing to spend within its means or to take any action to a problem of such scale as to fathom the size, the impact and eventual effect.

When other countries run sustained trade deficits, they must finance these by selling off domestic assets or running into debt—debt which they are obliged to pay. It seems that only the Americans are so bold as to say “Screw the world. We’re going to do whatever we want.”⁶¹⁹

⁶¹⁸ Jim McCarthy, *The Money Spiders, the Ruin-NATION of the United States by the Federal Reserve*.

⁶¹⁹ Michael Hudson.

“Down the river,” as first mentioned in the previous, or *sell them out*, is now before us; that is, it should be more evident, the consequences of maleficence on a scale of international proportions never experienced in human history.⁶²⁰ But the response to this dilemma, more a disaster, seems almost silent, reticent, and reserved—except for a relative few whose voices are increasingly censored, any public protest shuttered by the state, infused with provocateurs and/or otherwise shutdown before folks can act.

But such state-driven force is *nothing new under the sun* and, even here, is likewise a common theme—though greatly enhanced by the rise of the intelligentsia, a deep and wide spectrum of public and private organizations that represent *the deep state*.

David Talbot’s book, *The Devil’s Chessboard*, is an extensive description of the rise of the state’s secret government under the leaders such as Allen Dulles, CIA, and J. Edgar Hoover, FBI; men that wielded tremendous POWER over national and international figures, nations, and regions of the world.

Our country’s cheerleaders are wedded to the notion of American exceptionalism. But when it comes to the machinations of power, we are all too like other societies and ones that have come before us. There is an implacable brutality to power that is familiar throughout the world and throughout history.

Such *brutality*, as perhaps most of the public will never know or care..., should not be shocking given the size and strength of the state, the expanse and the endless investments in war driven by commercial interests. But it is this brutality that, *coming home* as it has and will, cast us *down the river, sold out to the bottom*.

⁶²⁰ The magnitude of this **maleficence** goes far beyond historical accounts, the extended debt and the military overreach characteristic of empires, that invariably leads to decay and destruction within.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Shoot from the hip,” as like a prized gunfighter with a *hair trigger*, to react suddenly, without consideration, usually involving words possibly followed by actions. Where one is willing or wanting..., with or without sensitivity let alone consideration, is where this applies, possibly followed by some humiliation, *foot in the mouth*. But then again, the same may follow with nothing but more chatter, cursing, and quips; a relentless routine without the least bit of air or opportunity for another to *get a word in edgewise*, but a *gift* (or curse) *to gab*.

One does not have to go *that far to shoot from the hip*; one *bullet* or blow may be enough to *take down* another, to send them reeling, headlong, wounded or knocked-out—or at last angry, resentful, and whatever else results in/from the proverbial *slip of the tongue* or the *flapping of the jaws*.

In this *age of information*, the notion might be that never has one (or all) had more opportunity to be *in the know*, to understand and therein, to comprehend matters notwithstanding individual ability or the complexity of the matter(s). The irony is however that more information does not mean better information, or most pointedly put, accurate information.

Presently, much of the public is being pounded with something prefaced or presumed to be science. Often echoed from politicians, state agencies and advisory organizations of some relations, this “science” is—using this word—considered to be so, never mind the details of where it came from, what data follows and the veracity, verification and validation that seems vital to any authenticity, authority. As it is, however, *science* is the claim, to *shoot from the hip*, and hence, that all the context or creations that come forth should be respected as fact, not possibilities or worse, *potions* to conjure up zombies that mindlessly and wretchedly shuffle around droning out sounds that, on the same footing, are claimed to be English.

“**Hip**,” has the honorable distinction of being the shortest phrase or idiom in this collection and otherwise slang for persons and places that are trendy or cool, *up on* the latest or *going* thing.

What is *hip* at this time is hype and hysteria (fear); yes, it is to express strong sentiment, if not outrage, concerning *the spread*—not of the Corona family of viruses, but of the fear that the current variant(s) will *come your way* with all the possibilities....

Yes, the virus family is real ⁶²¹, first identified in animals (1920s) and later in humans (1960s), yet the present variant(s) is/are likely the most identified—if not the only—given *the times* and apparent severity, symptoms, and statistics.

The test used to detect *a case* (positive) is abbreviated as PCR,⁶²² and while it is the only method of testing for this variant, there is some debate that it is, as *the method* among product sources, not reliable due the design, intended application, number of iterations.

There is/are plenty to debunk the “debate”, discounting *the stories* or arguments as intentionally misleading (regarding the unreliability, the misapplication of method, etc.) But then, the temptation for/of distortions at every angle or position, reliability *run roughshod* by expedience at any cost, a “warped-speed” drug.

⁶²¹ From Wikipedia, **Coronaviruses** are a group of related RNA viruses that cause diseases in mammals and birds. In humans and birds, they cause respiratory tract infections that can range from mild to lethal. Mild illnesses in humans include some cases of the common cold ..., while more lethal varieties can cause SARS, MERS, and COVID-19.

⁶²² **Polymerase chain reaction** (PCR) is a method widely used to rapidly make millions to billions of copies (complete copies or partial copies) of a specific DNA sample, allowing scientists to take a very small sample of DNA and amplify it (or a part of it) to a large enough amount to study in detail. PCR was invented in 1983 by the American biochemist Kary Mullis at Cetus Corporation

Pondering on points of POWER

“Steal thunder,” as expressed, “You stole my thunder when you *spilled the beans* (spoiling the surprise),” with emphasis on “steal” or “stole” (as in any tense is robbery).

At this time of year and given my location, rain seems almost certain; an easy prediction or forecast, a range of storms, sweeping and sometimes preceded with a single thunderclap but more often a series, also with range, from a boom to rumblings that flash across the skyline, a spectrum of spectacle.

Of some association of the given phrase and the natural occurrence, is the *thunder*; the first to *steal* and the second to revere; enormous electrical energy that, in the stirring of the spheres, raises the hair, dazzles the dark and shudders the senses as we cower below, our effort to remain neutral, charged but not fried.

But back to the first, the phrase, and the less spectacular occurrences of theft—of what we think we own but steal, rob, abscond. Yes, there is that commandment, “Thou shall not steal,” yet it happens of course, whether the culprit is petty, “professional”, or a public institution within or beyond *the letter of the law*. ⁶²³

When plunder becomes a way of life for a group of men in a society, over the course of time they create for themselves a legal system that authorizes it and a moral code that glorifies it. ⁶²⁴

Thus, theft becomes *the law of the land*, glorified by government for *the greater good* or, for the controversial, kept quiet are that or this which trump the petty or possible professional thievery with POWER above an alibi, admission, or allegation. But for all who must give account or be accountable, who abide for the better,

Don't steal—the government hates [the] competition! ⁶²⁵

⁶²³ Persons are subject to means/methods of theft, lawful or otherwise.

⁶²⁴ Frédéric Bastiat.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“**Shoot the breeze**,” means a casual conversation; nothing seemingly of significance but more as *talking into the wind* or, for some with “an agenda”, to mislead or manipulate, *blowing smoke*.

To the last of phrases above, *blowing smoke*, an elaboration goes no further than politics as a system that thrives, lives, and breathes in/on/by/with/for, and through, well, *bullshit*.

When the sky’s falling, I take shelter under bullshit. ⁶²⁶

...because a storm of shit comes raining down so quickly that it piles up, the stench more rancid than slack water. But eventually, after the shock and over time, our lives and living adjust and we notice less. Sure, we might still complain, but do little next to nothing, growing ever use to the *shit pulled by* or professed by those presumed to *care* but often if not always solely focused on themselves, their coffers and their care.

I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land...⁶²⁷

But finding “someone” seems very unlikely in that the whole is *hollowed-out, rotten from or to the core*; an institution that, with all its touted talents, is deeply entrenched in its own interests, POWER as both a *means and an end*. They are *broken men*—not in the good sense ⁶²⁸ as to be humbled, honest, and healthy, but instead, indeterminate to/of themselves, appearing as statesmen but in fact just politicians with *pockets that must be filled*⁶²⁹ to overflow. ⁶³⁰

⁶²⁵ Ron Paul.

⁶²⁶ Scott Lynch, *The Republic of Thieves*.

⁶²⁷ Ezekiel 22:30, NIV.

⁶²⁸ Brokenness that leads to stewardship.

⁶²⁹ Paid-off or bought with bribes posing as contributions.

⁶³⁰ Inspired by T. S. Eliot, *The Hollow Men*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Take a pill,**” is another previously covered—twice actually—but really deserves more given our culture, the popularity of drugs both legal and illegal, recreational and all the rests.

There is/are reason(s) for the epidemic of drugs in our culture; a condition that starts for the young and continues, legitimate or not, for all ages right up to death—and even for those *dealing with death*, patient, and other persons.

When everything and everyone is made into a commodity, by way of profligate influence and affluence, what is left for the sacred or, in the case of drug (use), discretion and *real science*? After all, the drug industry is enormously profitable whether considering the reported margins of Big Pharma or estimates of the illegal, illicit variety sometimes *making news* in some laundered forms, major drug busts, and industry linked to federal agencies., seemingly immune from investigation, prosecution or even admission? ⁶³¹

We are a pill-saturated society; one evidently not inoculated... but inundated with all forms whether the figurative variety of entertainment, attraction and distraction or the literal kind; some of which is placeable to health, medicine, but some of which is marginal, more to make money or, taken out of some dystopian prophesy to pacify persons or to make them placid, essentially submissive, sedentary, subjects of the *king, the unsurpassed pusher*.

But then the gains, the profits, the inculcation, the incomprehensible R/X that dwarfs a cartel’s *criminality*, and renders us infantile, suckling on tits of tranquility or pitching tantrums.

⁶³¹ The implies that federal agencies are directly involved in the development and distribution of illegal or illegitimate drugs; the origins of LSD, the *Iran-Contra Affair*, and the innerworkings of Big Business and government that run roughshod over *conflict of interests* and issues of ethics among other possible violations.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“Lighten up,” is with affiliations such as: *take a load off*, or *ease-up*, or *take it easy*, or *be cool*, or, as crossing public and private life, *remain calm and....*

One may confuse worries, fears, and anxiety, with conviction whether as introspective, *within their circle*, or beyond, whether close-by or far, far away. One may say, “They’re really uptight,” or as cautionary, “Try to relax,” or more *ancient of days*, “Be at peace,”—which is my preference among all expressed.

The truth is that if we care about something or someone—which is almost if not always true—then it is impossible not to get uptight, concerned and even fearful for what is perceived presently and/or seemingly sure to come, *looking down the road*.

What is true and truth among believers is that *The End Times* (or *Last Days*) is not coming... but is here—since the ascension of Christ. Given this truth, the truth, brings then a foretelling, prophesy, eschatology or by any other term or topic of like, “perilous time”.⁶³²

What and when then..., these “perilous times,” is a question with many possibilities, though described abstractly as so dire as to even deceive *the elect* if not ended.⁶³³ Those living in and through such times, will have much chance of worries, fears, and anxiety, as never before or since. Yes, folks will *turn* on each other, seemingly driven or directed to do so, by those who have neither the interest of the one or the other in mind, but are aimed to destroy them both, anyone and everyone created by/for God.

⁶³² 2 Timothy 3:

⁶³³ The details, degrees and timing, are not absolute or have universal agreement among *the church*, but are given to for the evident purpose of *taking heed*, preparing, watching and waiting for *the signs*, and finally, seeking salvation and standing in and through it all. From Matthew 24:24 - For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Get a life,**” is another way of saying, “You should live a more interesting, meaningful life,’ or in the least of meaning, but with intensity if not ire, “You’re boring the shit of out me!”

But then, one person’s life is not as another and, beyond argument, most persons are much more interested in their (own) life than others, is my opinion, which begs the question: “Do I have an interesting, meaningful, significant life?”

It is one thing to live (in the physical) and another to *really live* (emotionally, occupationally, inter-actively, cooperatively and in other meaningful and measurable ways). One may be breathing, their blood circulating, but *lifeless*, whatever *their story*, the causes, the conditions therein).

One may be alone, seemingly isolated, whether she *drove* persons away or they, ungracious or uncaring, gradually passed-on or passed-by, dead in true form or otherwise, the relationship so. As it is and, as likely always has been, one may not know *who moved first or entirely*, but:

Every man has his secret sorrows which the world knows not;
and often we call a man cold when he is only sad. ⁶³⁴

How and when one is able to return to or recover *a life* is somewhat a mystery; at one end is the *fruit*, fading in color and spoiling in content, too *far gone* to *come back*, the inertia inescapable; but on the other is *the push* and effort to live, to strive and to try to the extent of one’s will, to restore what was lost, to recover what has fallen, the felled family tree, past failures though not forever fallen.

To *get a life* is to seek life, to live fully, not withering away, and to desperately keep-on...despite all that one has had or does have to endure, and to keep learning and loving along the way.

⁶³⁴ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

“Get on with...,” has multiple possibilities. The one facing some pain and punishment may boldly announce, “Let’s get on with it,” while, from the last page, another may advise another, seemingly *stuck in the past*, “You need to get on with your life.”

From my *school days*, one of the few poems that I remember, forced to memorize, and recite, was by Robert Frost.

These woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.⁶³⁵

As the closing words, those that I most think of/about, remember, and consider here and there—and especially when I am weary, tired, or fatigued.

I don’t recall at the time, standing before the class, of really understanding the poem, and that the coachman or lone traveler was thought to be tired and cold, alone, but not lonely as in his words are described the “lovely” woods—though “dark and deep”. And, and perhaps the one thing that keeps him driving, are “promises to keep”; commitments in the true sense, of upmost import as to potentially put himself at risk of dying, freezing or just collapsing as his mind drifts like the snow that falls about him.

Who knows what lurks in the *dark and deep* woods; anything or anyone that, depending on their size and strength, might rob the driver or worse, kill him as marauders do, taking his horse(s), wagon and other possessions, his body behind, his soul now adrift too? And

Monsters are real, and ghosts are real too. They live inside us (too), and sometimes, they win (more than the outside do).⁶³⁶

⁶³⁵ Robert Frost, *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*.

⁶³⁶ Stephen King.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Stand a snowball’s...,” is a good follow-on from the last, the sharing of that snow that is so often serene—unless of course you must drive in it or do anything other than *take-in* the beauty from its first appearance to lay untouched by mud and such, tire tracks and ice pockets, but gleaming soft and white, clean, and bright.

For those (of us) of relatively little snow, the experience is far less loathed; a mere moment rather than a season, that can conjure-up all kinds of *winter wonderland*, excitement and exuberance that warms our hearts while other parts chill, numb and eventually thaw, leaving *a bite or bit of winter*, chapped skin, to remember what is remembered from the last time or some remote time, held frozen.

In even the least of snow days is the possibility, if not memory, where the snow melts, then freezes, leaving sheets of white and black ice, accentuated along the trodden paths of feet, wheel or any other tracking, tracks. And of course, slips, jukes, and jolts, one down or another into a tailspin, upended, considering in a flash: would it (have been) better to *take the path less traveled?* ⁶³⁷

Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail. ⁶³⁸

As the fresh snow, while not necessarily setting a way, seems a bit surer, one’s footing to the crunch, landed and locked, rather than *slip sliding away*, sure to end-up *wiped out* and who knows what the body will suffer once the humiliation is behind you?

Yes, go the way that is marked by no mark or, as adventurism does drive us (each), whether *deep and dark*, black, or bright, but is yours to forge, to feel and to find, your mark left behind.

⁶³⁷ Inspired by Robert Frost.

⁶³⁸ Ralph Waldo Emerson.

“...**Chance in hell**,” to punctuate the previous, *a snowball’s chance...*, and to emphasize that in such extremes, there is no probability of/to merely wave-off the effort and accept a certain eventuality, evident or not. One must *go for it*.

The rider or coachman in Robert Frost’s earlier featured poem is dog-tired and yet doggedly determined, adrift in the *dark and deep* and yet somehow able to keep his direction, fiercely decided *with miles to go*. One can and will be likely challenged with such; the combination of personal will, possibly augmented by some spiritual force, and the elements that in total seem to *paint the picture* of a ill-fated journey, and as the critique *cuts deep*, an ill-gotten idea—aptly quipped as “They never should have tried that in the first place,” almost always to follow failure, failing, as a possible heroic but certainly respected, respectable, attempt. After all, we love a winner—winning—and conversely, we despise a loser, losing.

Jesus said that if one wants to gain life, they must lose it and, conversely, those that seek to save their lives will lose their lives. Similarly, as said, is *the first* will be last and *the last* will be first—seemingly contradictory to the notion of victory, winning and being the winner.⁶³⁹

Admiration and respect are still earned by and given to those who exhibit human excellence, victory, even with the strong if not certain possibility that they do it primarily for themselves and seldom for others unless able to lose, to be last and to sacrifice....

⁶³⁹ The first of these two comes from Matthew 10:39, and the second from Matthew 19:13; either or both, as coming from Jesus, turns human ideas *on their head*, underscoring that victory or winning is the reward of faith and not the result of man’s individual and independent drive, self-fulfillment ambitions and will.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Stab in the back,” is about betrayal; it is beyond *turning back* or *turning your back*, but going to the next level to down, to deceive, disown, disable, possibility to death—a *coup de grâce*.

Tragedies climax or culminate to such; the possibly-pivotal moment that one presumed as trusted..., *turns* or carries out the act whether by impulse or developed, but to *do another in* by/with treachery tantamount to treason—perhaps as *throwing...under the bus*, (though I don’t see this...as quite the same as betrayal).

To carry this out, *a stab in the back*, one must lie, appearing as trustworthy and yet not so, their motives *dark and deep* like the forest in Robert’s Frost’s poem, the presumed *path home* laden by many obstacles’ unseen or undetected by the unsuspecting.

For there to be betrayal, there would have to have been trust.⁶⁴⁰

And *trust* is necessary for any substantive relationship.

Returning to a favorite film, *Braveheart*, the substory of Robert the Bruce, the father dying of leprosy while his son vies for the kingship, is an epic case of betrayal: outraged when discovered, the son storms into his father’s chamber and says, “I will never be on the wrong side again,” followed several scene’s later by a cutting response, “You deceived me,” followed with his father:

“You let yourself be deceived. In your heart, you always knew what had to happen here. At last, you know what it means to hate. Now you’re ready to be king.”⁶⁴¹

Which is lie on a lie, the denial of any wrongdoing, breaching all trust with his son, initially justifying his action as right for Scotland only later to justify as right for the Bruce family, sustaining their rule, while many *bled red* at Falkirk to die by deceit and the deceived.

⁶⁴⁰ Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games*.

⁶⁴¹ Script from *Braveheart*.

“Spill the beans,” is to release or disclose something otherwise hidden, *held tightly*, and is like *letting the cat out of the bag* or, in the realm of potential betrayal of one’s organization, *whistleblowing*.

As to *whistleblowing*, the events that lead someone to put much at risk and possibly do even the unthinkable,

Fear has always been a very important whistleblower. Our emotion and our history can provoke fear that may arrest us at any time or at any place. Above and beyond, fear might be contagious and its scent, sometimes sensual, sometimes mystical or animal, can exude the musty and arcane smell of destiny (e.g. One could still feel the smell of fear). ⁶⁴²

And courage, that runs *hand in hand* with fear.

How far will/does the whistleblower go to *make it known*; information and/or actions, that—in consideration and conclusion—poses enough potential danger to warrant disclosure and its consequences? Then one may have *an axe to grind*, using any notoriety or ignobility of such actions to malign and maliciously *throw others under the bus* or, at least, stir-up trouble *among the ranks*. There are witnesses and then there are false witnesses, the later as willing to lie to *see it through*; the first as most likely well-intended, earnest, and sincere, and the later as potentially malevolent, slanderous and, as a false witness, perjurious.

Of the *six things that God hates* ⁶⁴³ are a *lying tongue* and a false witness; that both are liars, but as to the second, is the type described above; one that willingly hurts others or cause others harm—obviously without justification—with or without any realization of the risks, immediate or long term, *the spilled beans* boiled to oblivion, and the behavior spilling over to burn everyone.

⁶⁴² Erik Pevernagie.

⁶⁴³ Proverbs 6:16-19.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Scrape the bottom...,” as to *be reduced* to the least, the lowest..., seemingly because there is nothing else available.

Continuing from the previous page, topic, of lying, a false witness, is that some folks, however possessed, are willing to go far to *see another hurt*—even destroyed—as the very idea brings delight, a sense of accomplishment—even justified in their head, their darkened heart, *deceived and deceiving*.

And plenty of stories prevail in the Scriptures to give substance to the idiom above, *scrape the bottom*, the depth at which one (or more) may go to destroy another, their destructive deeds leading to humiliation, shame, guilt, arrest, incarceration and even death—as in the case of Christ, ⁶⁴⁴ amid other stories from Cain and Abel to the martyrs of the faith punished and persecuted under Roman rule.

A liar or lying of this kind is *rock bottom, beneath* contempt, on scale with murder or, among *the six things that God hates*, taking innocent life. Often, one lie begets another and before you know it, the behavior is a habit, a lifestyle, where the one spends enormous amounts of time and energy attempting to *cover-up* their lies, the consequences, only to make discovery that much more certain, their ways that much more evident, obvious! Yes,

Lying is universal—we all do it. ⁶⁴⁵

But it is the habit or behavior that makes a deceiver. Couple this lifestyle with one who cannot admit to the wrong (doing) or worse, falsely blames others, and what you have is *a web* of destruction, a single point of entry felt to all corners, the liar, and their lair.

⁶⁴⁴ Jesus was falsely accused of heresy and in that, of threatening Roman rule, civility/order, as *an enemy of the state*, the Roman governor goaded into first scourging followed by crucifixion.

⁶⁴⁵ Mark Twain.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“...Of the barrel,” as the back half, the *last ditched effort*, the likely concentration of dregs, dirt, and anything else that one might stir up in a fury, desperate for a drink that ironically only whets their appetite for more, lies on lies, *deceived, and being deceived*.

Media and its patrons, the politics, and other persons of POWER, are renowned for floundering about *the bottom*; twisting, turning, churning the truth into a burning story that simply won't go away, but is, as propaganda is designed, aimed to control society, to render total rule without necessarily making it known, let alone noticed. And “Whoever controls the media, controls the mind.” ⁶⁴⁶

Today we live in a society in which spurious realities are manufactured by the media, by governments, by big corporations, by religious groups, political groups...

What is real?

Because unceasingly we are bombarded with pseudo-realities manufactured by very sophisticated people using very sophisticated electronic mechanisms. I do not distrust their motives; I distrust their power. They have a lot of it. And it is an astonishing power: that of creating whole universes, universes of the mind....⁶⁴⁷

And, of course, the *liar and their lair* are/is at center; one or more POWERS so able to *pull-it-off* with every means: libel, slander, whatever it takes, wherever and whenever it is possible, *spinning the web far beyond a yarn* just as the media and its powers.

The American people are free to do exactly what they are told. ⁶⁴⁸

Whether we realize it or not, *the rock bottom* is close and still closer.

⁶⁴⁶ Jim Morrison.

⁶⁴⁷ Phillip K. Dick

⁶⁴⁸ Ward Churchill.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Seal the deal,” as *to close*, as otherwise a sure thing, bonified and practically *written in stone*.

How one *seals the deal* is not particularly important in view of *the prize*, the win, success—at least in the short-term.

In a recent read, *The Art of the Lie* ⁶⁴⁹, the author writes:

...that the most effective and consequential victories are gained through artful deception...All warfare is based on deception.⁶⁵⁰

And rolls or spills over to “war-like” initiatives; that is, any effort or exertion aimed to win at potentially all costs, crush the opponent, and collect the spoils—all the while, justified *behind a veil* of victimization, a defense rather offensive posture, a matter of safety and security, a cause for the *common* or “greater good”.

Anyone who deploys such warcraft is, in the best possible outcome, revered and exalted—as with the heroes of wars, past and present—except by the either the dead and/or disempowered, whose story is either shutdown, shutout or scorned as conspiracy or sheer stupidity. And anyone who follows through with warcraft is decidedly willing to deny wrongdoing as prior and present POWER enables them, to deceive in both directions, lies upon lies—as a primary costs—that ultimately leads to their own degradation, a complete loss of integrity and trustworthiness, left only with some residue of the power so fervently sought, gained, used and abused, to win against whatever and whomever is crushed, scarred or barred, from their existence save a *doormat to wipe their feet* as they pass to and from their inner sanctum to/from seals yet to deal.

⁶⁴⁹ *The Art of the Lie, How Manipulation of Languages affects our Minds*, Marcel Danesi, 2020.

⁶⁵⁰ The context is Sun Tzu’s, the *Art of War*, which is heralded, a hallmark of/on warcraft.

“Make it happen,” is somewhat like *seal the deal*, again, *doing what it takes* to win or at least *see it through*; and either as an intention, is not bad, wrong, wicked evil given that we generally want to win and will fight hard to *make it happen*.

Where intention fails however is method and, much to theme of numerous pages thus far, the POWER of lies or by any other name, lying, cheating, and thieving—the *triple threat* of integrity and trust. Again, from *The Art of the Lie*.

Lying is common, manifesting itself in a variety of deceptive strategies...such as *swindle, defraud, cheat, trick, hoodwink, dupe, mislead, delude, outwit, lead on, inveigle, beguile, double-cross*, among others.

And as to power, and with/by all the synonyms and associated methods, *the lie is a force-multiplier*—and especially toward those who, as in family and friend, are (or were)trusting without condition, never mind the signs or any other cause for caution, concern, or consternation. But still, and as with Bruce in the film *Braveheart*, once betrayed, “I will never be on the wrong side again.”

There is a deeper and darker deception deployed to one seemingly so close—a conclusive *sell-out* of integrity and trustworthiness, let alone the *sin that may pass on to several generations*.⁶⁵¹ Still, there is hope *beyond the grave* for those enduring (having endured) derision and indifference against their drive and determination, to find a way to overcome and live beyond what was done and undone, from the inner sanctum of the *liar in the lair*; deeply flawed, darkly driven, and devoid of all love.

⁶⁵¹ *Sin passed on to several generations* in the context of Scriptures, the manifesting and maturing of *bad blood*, the scorn and shame of siblings, and the cruel and calloused denial of the culprit, the planting of *insidious seed*, the sins of which do not die with them.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**On a roll**,” is associated to *in the groove* or, more updated, *nailing it*. Not to be confused with a rant, *a roll* is somewhat wanted, worthy if just entertaining, and certainly not a complaint, *bellyache*, or *bend*. Like it or not, the same holds here; more on lying, *the art* of it, and why it is a *force-multiplier* of/for POWER.

From the same book referenced on the prior page, the “Machiavellian liar” is a master illusionist who performs verbal wizardry to intentionally deceive— even and especially the closest of kin—as in *Braveheart* where Bruce senior uses his son to *get to Wallace*—to *set the snare with a lie and lair* that leads/lends to the charge of treason, execution in London per King Longshanks.

On a roll, the Machiavellian will *run roughshod...*, ruthlessly *cutting down and cutting out* “the closest”, leaving others clueless, befuddled, feckless, fearful, or enthralled with/by “the liar prince”.

Manipulation and fearmongering are primary goals of the liar-prince. These allow him to rise to leadership by forging alliances, gathering followers and allies, and offsetting opponents through his mendacious art.

And is this capacity, *the prince* is—in the worst of worlds—revered, exalted and even worshiped as,

These allies typically come under his direct mind control; the followers see in him a lion-warrior; the opponents fear that he will insidiously destroy them publicly with his words.

And though the *liar-prince* is *nothing new under the sun*,

Perhaps at no other time in human history has mendacity found such fertile ground...[as] in this intellectually amorphous environment, truth and lies, facts and untruths, myth, and science ...are so common that they go largely unnoticed.

As the fog thickens, the ship of state drifts further off course, destined to wreck at *the bottom of the barrel, rock bottom*, yet another fallen from within, mutinied in effect.

“Roll the dice,” or *take a chance* by any other game, gamble, is a certainty and uncertainty; that if you don’t play, you cannot win or cannot collect on the gains to be gained, *chance on your side*.

And the *liar-prince* (or lion-warrior), is more than willing to *hang it out there*; to *tickle your ears*, to tell what you want to hear, believe, both *the game* and *the gain*—it’s all about you, for you, as suggested.

“Yes, We Can..., Drain the Swamp,” and *make it great again*; *take back* what is rightfully ours, a dream finally come true in so many words with so little substance—and so many lies.

And yet *the game(s)* goes on with generations that come and go, played again and again, any *chance on your side* distorted in/through the message, the hype, the hearsay, and the hullabaloo dispersed beneath *deals made in Hell, selling souls to the Devil* as though the *devil may care*, and giving homage to the POWERS in the shadows, *the liars of the lair*.

Falsehoods are never believed in the abstract; they must be devised as referring to something that people can understand concretely or to which they can relate personally.

And for any who feel or believe that they are excluded from *the game*, disparate from/for the deal, such falsehood constructs are a well sent, a gift not only cherished but more, counted-on no matter experience or the record of generations *too wise for their own britches*, too distant except that *chance* is finally *on your side*.

As *the game(s)* do (or does) play-out, a few *do win*; that is, enough to let be known far and wide to give others a false belief that gains are *just around the corner*, so close that *they can taste it*. Yes, someone must win every once a while; otherwise, no one would likely believe...accept a reality that is built on taking, and not giving, hurting, and not helping, while leaving a trail of deception and degradation far and wide, for you, as far (and long) as you can *roll the die* dreaming of *the gains to be gained* amid untallied losses.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Under the table,” as a transfer or exchange above, aside or beneath the formal, and especially with a secret or covert payment. (e.g., the accused was acquitted after the judge received *under the table* payments); associated to bribery, blackmail, and *bleeding*.

The criminal justice system is in fact—and by design—corrupt; forfeiting any chance for justice with expedience, closing the time and effort between a charge and conviction, guilt, or innocence; but it is, *beyond any reasonable doubt*, a system of punishment that, without *the roll of the dice*, assures punishment—even short of an actual conviction let alone the proof presumed necessary. ⁶⁵²

There is however a *silver lining* in the otherwise *dark cloud* that hangs over dubious notions of the rule of law; some chance or possibility for clemency—deserved or not—that is depending on money. Yes, “justice” can be bought, sold, or otherwise purchased.

It is better to risk saving a guilty person than to condemn an innocent one.⁶⁵³

Enter *the green*, a “the great decider” of guilt, but the great derider of/for true justice.

For there is but one essential justice which cements society, and one law which establishes this justice. This law is right reason, which is the true rule of all commandments and prohibitions. Whoever neglects this law, whether written or unwritten, is necessarily unjust and wicked.⁶⁵⁴

But it is after all merely *cement*, “right reason”, and not *the green*.

⁶⁵² Referring to the process of *Discovery*; the collection, dissemination and analysis of evidence that, in theory, serves to determine guilt beyond a reasonable doubt; and the plea bargain that circumvents *due process*, the 5th Amendment, the so-called rights of the defendant.

⁶⁵³ Voltaire, *Zadig et autres contes*.

⁶⁵⁴ Marcus Tullius Cicero, *On the Laws*.

"Behind closed...," is commonly followed by "doors" or, if not in secrecy, at least in the privacy of one's own home—if that is even possible in this day and time. And another to follow *behind closed doors*, is that "What happens in _____, stays in _____."

Reminded of a country-pop song of the 1970s by a similar title, "And know one knows what goes on behind closed door," ⁶⁵⁵ as one of series of sorted themes that send the teen into *overdrive* or others toward an experience of same, with or without a mentioned name.

But beyond sexual intimacy, as a sure way to get attention, even allegiance for the moment, are the other things that can and do happen *behind closed doors*—and especially the things that "never happened" ⁶⁵⁶, deniable to/from all degrees, any and everything *on the table* that does not exist as record has it. Once again, from David Talbot's book, *The Devil's Chessboard*,

"Fundamentally, the founding fathers of U.S. intelligence were liars," Angleton told Trento in an emotionless voice. "The better you lied and the more you betrayed, the more likely you would be promoted.... Outside of their duplicity, the only thing they had in common was a desire for absolute power. I did things that, in looking back on my life, I regret. But I was part of it and loved being in it."

He invoked the names of the high eminences who had run the CIA in his day.... These men were "the grand masters," he said. "If you were in a room with them, you were in a room full of people that you had to believe would deservedly end up in hell."

As *a door* that once closed to one, is closed.

⁶⁵⁵ "Behind Closed Doors", Charlie Rich, 1973.

⁶⁵⁶ **The things that never happened**, to mean matters of espionage, collusion, covert and clandestine activities of *the state apparatus* and its ilk, **to/from all degrees**, from local to international pockets of power, *held-close as a force-multiplier*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Rat race**,” is a creation of *the modern day*, the industrial revolution and the rise of the metro, a massive concentration of the mechanized society first captured on film in the 1927 *Metropolis*,⁶⁵⁷ but indicative of much of the landscape today with all the attendant problems lending to a society in decline.

Major cities are (have been), in decline as a *bellwether* of the culture, society and its systems, given such developments as *white flight*,⁶⁵⁸ with all the attendant consequences of property values, crime, poverty and homelessness. When/as those who could afford to leave..., the vacuum created would have brought decline to any population—though in the case of our country, to minorities who could not leave, escape. Again, from the author of *The Devils’ Chessboard*, David Talbot.

Peace and love no longer held dominion in San Francisco.... “The information we got in San Francisco was that folks were buying into violence in a wholesale lot,” he said.... His apocalyptic vision extended to American cities in general. They were falling into brutishness and depravity. And the only solution: withdraw from their destructive vortex and lead a simple, communal life in the country.⁶⁵⁹

And as to whether or for how long major cities remain viable, depends much on subsidies necessary for operations, sustainment.

⁶⁵⁷ *Metropolis* is a 1927 German expressionist science-fiction drama film, capturing the plight of the industrial worker and, in the vein of communist ideology, with emphasis on solidarity, unity, as a hedge against exploitation, a strength found from/in organized labor.

⁶⁵⁸ From Wikipedia, *white flight* is the sudden or gradual large-scale migration of white people from areas becoming more racially or ethnoculturally diverse. Starting in the 1950s and 1960s, the terms became popular in the United States.

⁶⁵⁹ David Talbot, *Season of the Witch: Enchantment, Terror and Deliverance in the City of Love*

“Race against time,” is just that; the ability to keep pace with, or exceed, the developments of time—natural or man-made—that affect life and living, sustainment and substance, as our culture trends toward decline while others rise, replacing us as once great.

It seems that all are bound by time—that no one (yet) is master over time, as with immortality and all the POWER therein, thereof.

A human being is a part of the whole called by us “universe”, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feeling as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness.

But,

This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.

And in this “task”, taken from a mind renown for its dimensions, is the simple words among challenging and challenged action(s): compassion.

Persons, one to one, can be compassionate, laying aside the demands of their lives and living while considering others, their lives and living—unlike institutions predisposed to do what is strictly in their interest whether stated as such or as excused as “the greater good”, “the best interest of...,” or any number of other alibis.

Try not to become a man of success. Rather become a man of value.⁶⁶⁰

Where *value* holds attention and action to/toward community, the folks gain from *our better angels*.

⁶⁶⁰ Albert Einstein.

“Running on fumes,” is rooted in the automobile, *running out of fuel* (energy).

Kilroy J. Oldster, from his 2016 published book, *Dead Toad Scrolls*, captures the “a growing sense...,” of our nation, now *running on fumes*.

A growing sense of unease presently pervades the American consciousness. Americans are no longer as confident in their nation and self-assured as they once were. A sense of frustration and anger underscores American consciousness.

Americans are looking over our shoulder at other emerging economic juggernauts and wondering if we can still be world’s social, political, and economic leader when Congress cannot even manage to balance the national budget.

The thought that we are diminishing in stature in the eyes of the international community constantly torments Americans. Faded glory strikes a crippling blow to the American psyche. Analogous to an aging beauty queen, America might still possess a golden crown, but she lost her luster. In an eroding empire, Americans feel like second-class citizens in the union of nations.

And this *low tank* trend, trip, is not an oversight or an “oops”; no, this decline is planned and purposed, *pushing one nation to the curb*, for others to pass—namely, a world order long presented by President Bush but much longer in planning, the ever-rising centralized government, the concentration of POWER internationally.

To undertake a journey on a road never traveled requires character and courage: character because the choice is not obvious; courage because the road will be lonely at first. And the statesman must then inspire his people to persist in the endeavor.⁶⁶¹

⁶⁶¹ Henry Kissinger, *World Order: Reflections on the Character of Nations and the Course of History*.

“Read the riot act,” is to be warned; a vigorous reprimand, given forcefully, severely.

Again, *pushed to the curb*, nations continue to yield to international rule; ⁶⁶² centralized and concentrated POWER as never before—that, as with all centralized powers, will invariably destroy itself, the consequences of which cannot be measured, let alone controlled by humanity alone. This “New World Order” will present tyranny as never seen or witnessed the world over, inflicting much hardship and harm to humanity—to include the elimination of much of this population under the ever-present spirits of eugenics ⁶⁶³ and the economic “needs” of a relative few, *the vile maxim of the masters of mankind* ⁶⁶⁴.

Population(s) that refuse to obey orders, dictates, will be (and have been) *read the riot act*, losing all rights of citizenry—for what remains after national powers have *done their dirty work*—and ultimately will be put to death, summarily and *Corn6419423*/or through attrition.

⁶⁶² Nations are reigned in under such methods or means of Neo-Conservatism and Neo-Liberalism; two terms that in essence represent tyranny, militarily and economically. And to carry this governance are organizations such as: World Health; International Monetary Fund (IMF); the G20 (and 7), Council of Foreign Relations (CFR), Bilderberg, Group, the Trilateral Commission, a vast array of Intelligence, both public and private, working on behalf of corporations and international financial interest—on the premise, though expanded, that those that issue and control the money care not who makes the laws (Mayer A. Rothschild).

⁶⁶³ **Eugenics**, as a classification for (or hierarchy of) humanity, remains at large as *a spirit* among “elite”, and rationalization of/for judgment of human value; the determination of worth and justification for life, death and subjection either way.

⁶⁶⁴ Referring to a description of the worst of human powers, from Adam Smith’s, *The Wealth of Nations*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Rack your brains**,” or to give it a thought and then more; to keep thinking..., to try to *wrap your arms around* a matter, the problem or whatever it is that is *gnawing (at) you*.

To choose one of many idioms in this collection, my present choice would be (is) this one, *rack your brains*, given all the soft and hard force imposed on an international scale, seemingly *leaving no stone unturned* when it comes to the application (injection) of an experimental drug despite the variable effect, the apparent continuation of boosters unlimited, while all HIPPA rights (or human rights) are increasingly and intensively constrained if not annulled.

Meanwhile, *the programs* (possibly *pogroms* ⁶⁶⁵) proceed unabated, the present policies transitioning from *soft* to *hard* forces using exclusion and isolation ⁶⁶⁶, coupled with the continuing and calculated confusion and chaos, *rooting-out* any naysayer or noncommittal as “the cause” ..., as possibly then a criminal ⁶⁶⁷.

With the intensifying pressure(s) come increased public protests—that is, for some populations with the gumption and grit to *go at them*—and ever-growing conflict and contention that is, after all, the desired effect(s): division, decline, destruction, degrading national governments and the reset via a world order governance, is marks the aim of autocracy gone oligarchy.

⁶⁶⁵ Used here, *pogroms*, to infer that an organized massacre may be afoot, foul play under the rubric of healthcare, the ruse of public welfare.

⁶⁶⁶ From on to another national governments, laws or orders are underway to exclude and isolate the non-drugged, sliding every close to Revelation 13 description of same; that no one can buy or sell, save those who have *the mark* (passport).

⁶⁶⁷ In the eventuality of penalties, pressures, is criminalization whether deemed as *bioterrorism* or more conventionally, a dissident, danger, that if, as history tells, is aimed to rid the world of such a threat.

“Break a leg,” apparently is rooted in stage theater and acting; that those who bowed or curtsied following a performance, presumably did (do) well, *broke a leg*, had good luck. And as to *good luck* or *break a leg*, it is not always said sincerely as, “Yeah right, good luck,” or, coupled with a smirk or snicker, “Sure, break a leg.” One can hardly expect to do well or draw from what is called “luck”, without belief and some encouragement to boot. Most... want to do well, to give it their best, and to endeavor to keep on trying...; that is, until they all hope and see that, even with all their might and will, the chances are too small, the odds too great, the outcome too certain. Sometimes, and not to seem or sound crass,

Shit has a momentum that good luck just doesn't have.⁶⁶⁸

Which is to say that the world, closing in, can seem as though it (or they) is against you, not only absent of any potential to encourage, well wish, or stand by, but are indifferent—not caring if you win or lose, rise, or fall, live, or die. What is more (or less) is that they—whatever “they” are or are not—may long for your defeat, downfall, and demise, convinced that, as a judge of sort, you deserve it, have earned it and, for the entertainment and momentary satisfaction, are *getting it and getting it good!*

It was Job who said, regarding the so-called counselors and more, that *men at ease have contempt for misfortune as the fate of the those whose feet are slipping*⁶⁶⁹, which is to say that there are those that look upon a life bereft of wellness, luck or by any other of supposed “blessing” as deserving—unlike themselves—merely receiving that which is due or, as a judgment, what God doth sentence, punishment in proportion to their transgressions.

⁶⁶⁸ Cath Crowley, *Words in Deep Blue*.

⁶⁶⁹ Job 12:5.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Quality time,” is one that possibly came about during, or coincident with, the rise of the “self-help” surge⁶⁷⁰, the idea of managing time well, by some qualification, as “quality time”. One might say, “We spend some *quality time* together,” to emphasize that it is (was) meaningful, productive, effective, insightful, redeeming, mutually beneficial, and any number of other qualifications, deemed, decided, even declared.

Time is the most valuable coin in your life. You and you alone will determine how that coin will be spent. Be careful that you do not let other people spend it for you.⁶⁷¹

And to *take it to heart*, one’s time as well spent,

He who every morning plans the transactions of that day and follows that plan carries a thread that will guide him through the labyrinth of the busy life.⁶⁷²

Yet there is “the reality” where one does not know in detail *what the day will bring*; we do not know from hour to hour how everything will develop, and in that, must be flexible, agile to the possibilities, problems, and predicaments, demands, and deviation(s).... And to underscore, there is (are) that which can and does change, rise, and subside, yet pressing the point for preparation as possible, a flexible and agile plan, planning.

Also too, and in keeping with planning, is discernment; the ability to see and perceive, to have a *holy hunch*, a spiritual sense, based on conditions, trusting by faith and prayer and with sound purpose, “the reality” unfolding presently and to that come.

⁶⁷⁰ Maybe it stems from time management or from human factors, operations management, industry, and business; but the ideal is the same: don’t waste or squander time but instead, *make the most of it*.

⁶⁷¹ Carl Sandburg.

⁶⁷² Victor Hugo.

“**Queensberry rules**,” is a bit of a quirk, a phrase uncommon or outdated, related to boxing, but rules just the same, a standard aimed to ensure a “fair fight”, *Marquis of Queensberry rules* ⁶⁷³.

What is most common in this phrase are rules; boundaries or limitations imposed, aimed for fairness, *no hitting below the belt* and other *foul play* that is likely used—and often—as one more means to win, succeed, and dominate no matter. And while boxing is brutal, a violation of the rules leads to at least penalties if not disqualification—and even banning in the extremes—among and within the organized game.

Imagine the organized game or a sanctioned fight where one is given the leeway to do anything and everything; to kick, bite and flagrantly foul in every way—no holds barred—while the other is held to *letter of the law*, all rules, and apparently set-up to fail, certain to lose.

When persons are charged with a crime, they are like the one who is “certain to lose”; they can be *held indefinitely....* ⁶⁷⁴ Moreover, they are denied a trial or due process, any add-on charges or bookings aimed to force a plea, else add another year to their detainment as punishment—a case not yet adjudicated, prosecuted, or finalized. Their opponent, *the state*, openly breaks the rules, using all expedience to ensure punishment regardless of proven guilt, flagrantly violating the 5th Amendment, due process, etc.

⁶⁷³ From Wikipedia, *Marquess of Queensberry* rules, also known as Queensbury Rules, are a code of generally accepted rules in the sport of boxing drafted in London in 1865 and published in 1867.

⁶⁷⁴ To my understanding, jails cannot hold any detainee for longer than 1 year, but can add charge(s) or bookings at the end of that year, *resetting the calendar*, generally because they are unable to *cop a plea* and are in effect exacting a sentence while denying a trial or due process.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Quantum leap**,” often used to suggest a sudden change, major step, or great progress, with origins to aerospace, also to a TV series that aired between 1989 and 1993.⁶⁷⁵

I looked up at the wall. My bachelor's degree had been in History. Films like *Back to the Future* and *Quantum Leap* had been some of my favorite programs. Could time travel really be possible? This seemed too unreal.⁶⁷⁶

And yet it real; that is, if you consider Scriptures⁶⁷⁷; this travel is suggested in the words, “suddenly took” in Acts, with Philip, and long before then, recounted in Hebrews, the taking away of Enoch—though never dead.

While humanity appears to remain dependent on/in time, there are dramas⁶⁷⁸ and developments⁶⁷⁹ displaying such or similar, closing the distance, teleportation to other times, past and future, *freezing* or again, higher velocities *taking the edge off*.

To *master time* is a *quantum leap* in POWER, it seems, though still the many possibilities therein; the arduous effort to control (it), and the unchecked tendency to abuse it, with all the attendant corruption of self-interest at the expense of truth let alone the other costs, past, present, and future.

⁶⁷⁵ From Wikipedia, ***Quantum Leap*** is an American science-fiction television series regarding time travel within one's on lifetime, the physicist using himself as “the guinea pig,” traveling back and forth while aimed to return the present, normalcy.

⁶⁷⁶ Anna M. Aquino.

⁶⁷⁷ Scriptures suggest time travel in both the Old and New Testament, Enoch recounted in Hebrews and Philip in Acts.

⁶⁷⁸ A few (other) dramas include: *Lost*, *Doctor Who*, 11-22-63, *Outlander*. *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*, *Planet of the Apes*, *Back to the Future*, *Star Trek*, *Forever Young*, *Sleeper*, and many more.

⁶⁷⁹ Developments, as in physics, are reported on some level, leaving other...in secrecy, to include human travel at the *speed of light*.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“Leap frog,” in this application is simply to *go out of turn*, to *cut in front* or to not wait your turn like others, deviating from the notion that everyone must follow in line, first come first serve.

One does not have to be too old to grasp this concept, *leapfrog*, whether the game or, as to lines, going *out of turn* or otherwise, *cutting in line*.

But going further, more to spiritual, is the understanding that *the first will be last* and *the last*, therefore, *will be first*; or expressed another way, those who serve, seemingly by putting others before them, are indeed a servant and more, surrendered to Christ, unconditional love. And to this idea, more a lifestyle, is that while

Not all of us can do great things...

Still, we each can (and should)

We can do small things with great love,⁶⁸⁰

unconditionally.

One source of POWER inherent to individuals but absent institutions, is this form of love; that persons possess uniquely the capacity to love unconditionally, compassion and empathy. And

It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving.

To add to the power of love above money or other material things.

Sure, institutions can give much materially, which has some undoubted benefit, but such giving is never unconditional or without *strings attached*; no, and especially for *the state* that *spews-out money like no tomorrow*, on books or *off book*, to in effect *buy* others to do their bidding and to *bow at their feet*. Yes, the state's policy is to buy-off or buy-out their way while *kicking the can down the road*.

⁶⁸⁰ Mother Teresa.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Pay lip service,” is mere words—no action of any substance beyond air—a blowhard, *wind, hot air*, a lie.

This description of a lie is often in the context of some POWER(s) that verbally are *all-in* and yet fail, intentionally or not, to follow through, *to be there*, to carry out a supposed commitment and, in the scheme of things, to betray as previously the *stab in the back*.

A man who lies to himself is often the first to take offense. It sometimes feels very good to take offense, doesn't it? And surely he knows that no one has offended him, and that he himself has invented the offense and told lies just for the beauty of it, that he has exaggerated for the sake of effect, that he has picked on a word and made *a mountain out of a pea*--he knows all of that, and still he is the first to take offense, he likes feeling offended, it gives him great pleasure, and thus he reaches the point of real hostility.⁶⁸¹

And to try to make sense of this is to accept that advised, admitted as unbecoming; above all, do not lie to yourself.

A witness (*before* authorities), such as in *a hearing*, may (still) take an oath or vow ⁶⁸² *to tell the truth...*; but they may subsequently, willfully, falsify testimony either passively denying (denial of) that known (to be) and/or actively giving fraudulent testimony, evidence. Indeed, false witnesses can/do subvert justice—a criminal offense—putting their self-interest above the pursuit of justice, etc. As to the motivation(s) or drivers, self-preservation and/or malicious intent, it does not matter—as a false witness is, again, violating law, knowingly committing a felony that by some standards, is no less than murder.

⁶⁸¹ Fyodor Dostoyevsky.

⁶⁸² Not sure if courts still carry out this oath, vow, “to tell the truth and nothing but the truth so help me God.”

“Pie in the sky,” is something “imaginative”; it is pleasant to consider or contemplate but *next to impossible* to *pull-off*, occur, or happen. One might say to another, whatever their intention, “That’s a great idea—but it will never work!”

History holds to the possibility and certainty a *pie in the sky* or “high” ideals have worked, come to fruition as legend, marvels of mankind, and feats to behold, witness, or at least read about. Too, those who face great obstacles, challenges, daunting and dangerous, rank among the highest, most revered..., sometimes.

There are however great marvels, inventions, and developments that, while measured as magnanimous or showered with praise and pomp, do not generally benefit humanity; and to the extremes, such ideas pose great risks and issues to societies, nations, and *the world* beyond. Yes, these great achievements, while technologically *touching the heavens*, can cause a living Hell on Earth!

Now, I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.⁶⁸³

And justified as a deterrent to war, as it may be, *the bomb* changed us all, then, and now, and beyond; yes, it poses both risks and issues to humanity, a habitable environment. Yet, and to each,

When we deny the EVIL within ourselves, we dehumanize ourselves, and we deprive ourselves not only of our own destiny but of any possibility of dealing with the EVIL of others.

And in that, let us seek and support POWER that can/does help overcome EVIL, to the betterment of ourselves and

To the confusion of our enemies.

⁶⁸³ Robert Oppenheimer, regarding the outcome of his invention, the atomic bomb; an ancient Hindu scripture.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Pointblank,” is probably derived from firearms, to mean (a weapon) fired (from) very close to its target, though it might extend...with application to, say, sex, with such remarks as, “I am right on target”, or “...am firing with *real bullets* (unblocked),” comparing one’s “gun” to the real thing.

But then the foreplay; all the effort and energy exerted and exercised in the name of love, lust, or some mix of the two, euphemized as dating, romance, courting or, in the contemporary, *hooking-up*—though the latter is more usually extreme.

Passion played out among the platonic or the pre-marital is POWER—not purely of love, but all that applies to attraction(s) from an electronic record to an erotic encounter.

She's my sun and I'm her moon connected by an invisible thread,
bound but free. ⁶⁸⁴

But a passion so often with a short fuse, *taking-off* with a *mission* that covers no more than *the night*...and then the *hiss of ambers that instantly fade into the dark, no dust to sweep under the rug.*

Failure to sleep with someone is now an act of hostility, whereas it was once understood to be part of the natural process of searching for one’s mate. ⁶⁸⁵

Meanwhile, and since the late 1970s, marriage per capita is in decline; a trend that includes a rising number...as having no interest in or intention for marriage, now or ever. ⁶⁸⁶

⁶⁸⁴ Helena Hunting, *Hooking Up*.

⁶⁸⁵ Wendy Shalit, *A Return to Modesty: Discovering the Lost Virtue*.

⁶⁸⁶ “U.S. Marriage Rates Hit New Recorded Low”, U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee, April 29, 2020. Over the past 18 years, the national marriage rate has fallen by about 20 percent, with the decline concentrated among states in the South.

“On target,” to follow-on from the previous page, the context of sexuality with all the complexity and confusion of *the modern age*. And in these times are but another “minority” class, a collective vying for privilege, a population recognized in the politic, quite diverse but above all, inclusive and aimed to scorn hate, prejudice, and violence—both presently and that determined in the past.

Not that privilege is anything new or that one collective or another is not singled-out as deserving...underappreciated or ill-treated. But in this development, the basis is not race, religion or social-economic but, for emphasis, is one’s sexual preference(s), their desires played-out whatever the justification, biology and so forth. And to take diversity to the extremes is like deciding on the limits of a *black hole* or the number of grains of sand on the beach.

But for any that question the endless possibilities, the spreading of sexuality so thin as to make it non-existent, is the burden of hostility and hypocrisy—not to mention exclusion, bigotry, or essentially hating those who hate or have hated. For all practical purposes, *diversity* is exclusionary, not celebrating individual choice but the complete opposite, the collectivism of groupthink.

The main misfortune, the root of all the evil to come, was the loss of confidence in the value of one’s own opinion. People imagined that it was out of date to follow their own moral sense, that they must all *sing in chorus*, and live by other people’s notions, notions that were being crammed down everybody’s throat.⁶⁸⁷

By a directionless *herd* of limitless hedonism, seeking/gaining privilege that leads, always, to loss of privileges or opportunities (of other groups)—not the least of which is to form and retain one’s own individual sense of fairness, good, right, and sexuality.

⁶⁸⁷ Boris Pasternak, *Doctor Zhivago*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Pass the torch (baton),” is another from track and field, the relay or as ancient tradition carries to today, the lighting of the torch, initiating *the games*.

From long ago, and my very limited sports’ life, a 1600-meter relay team does not have to precise, timely, *pointblank*, or *on target*. in *the exchange* of the baton (unlike the 400-meter event, where the hand-off must be lockstep, both leg and arm. The *1600* is forgiving whereas the *400*, not, the moments that count, a front-runner upended by a slip or anything out of sync to the second.

Aside the similarity and differences of *the relay*, is the broader context; to give and receive, to offer and to take, the timing and delivery in a mutual effort, a common goal or objective, a *push to the finish* or at least the next *milestone* or objective(s).

Folks of all *walks of life* participate in *the relay*; they engage in a variety of social and spiritual relations, to *pass the torch*, preferably to promote humanity not as perfect or perfected but pursuing such...in the celebration of who and what we are—and are not. Humanity is riddled with the certainty of corruption yet, as God’s creation, are minded and cared for from the heavens, ⁶⁸⁸ or grace: a way out of, set free from, the *nations that conspire and peoples that plot in vain, the kings of the earth that take their stand and the rulers who gather against the Lord*, ⁶⁸⁹ aimed to sever humanity from *the creation* and thus *The Creator*; each removed from *the relay*, waylaid from the events, refrained from *running the race* whereby and wherein one is called to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly. ⁶⁹⁰

⁶⁸⁸ Considering Scripture such as: Psalms 8:3-8, 16:2; Job 7:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; James 1:17; 1 Corinthians 4:7; Deuteronomy 8:18.

⁶⁸⁹ Psalm 2: 1-2.

⁶⁹⁰ Micah 6:8.

“Run in circles,” or to waste time and energy in trivial, aimless, or futile activities or effort, or in this process, not make meaningful progress. And while most track events involve a circular track, what is more is the timing, a race against time.

In and throughout humanity is the reality of our limited, finite lifespan; conceived and carried to that *last breath*, our earthly *finish line*, aside or before what waits on *the other side*. But for what time is given us (each) is sometimes the question of whether it is used well—whatever “well” really means, contrived, or confirmed, on standards. How or what is “well” is considered open to debate but finally, *the other side*, is weighed in some measure, found wanting or worthy.⁶⁹¹ Personally, “well” may be reduced to strictly one’s interests, passions, and pursuits, discounting or dismissing all other..., or it may include or encompass others, and especially those within *touch*; those that can further benefit in the perception and passing of “well”, wellness. And whether “good” or “well”, there is the sense that

To be away from the presence of God is to be without any good, without any glory, without any honor. Thus, it seems that those sent away from the presence of the Lord will lose whatever remains of the image of God in them. They will then eat and devour one another for all eternity.⁶⁹²

Naturally, there is conflict and contention; *the human condition* that puts us at odds—not only with others but also with ourselves—with or from corruption, *out of sync* and downright sinister, that *runs circles* around “good” and “well”, mercy and humility.

⁶⁹¹ Daniel 5:27.

⁶⁹² “What is Man that You are Mindful of Him?”, Desiring God, April 26, 2018.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Pipe down**,” is a blunt request to stop talking or making noise, simply said, “Shut up!” And as to how or where this came to be, time and place, who knows? But this phrase grabs attention as it carries the “right stuff”, phonetics...volume; it is POWER, emitted from some authority (instructor, coach, parent, etc.), with one round possibly replaced/followed by a shrill whistle, punctuation, but effective—at least for the moment—the racket *ratcheted down*.

Given that the voice or throat/lungs are sometimes referred to as “pipes”, as with an organ, perhaps it comes from there, as, “She has a nice set of pipes (or great singing voice). And there is power in music too, harmonies and melodies, notes and keys, vocals, and instruments of all kinds, captured in the poets:

Where words fail, music speaks. ⁶⁹³

Music is the universal language of mankind. ⁶⁹⁴

Who hears music, feels his solitude, peopled at once? ⁶⁹⁵

Music acts like a magic key, to which the most tightly closed heart opens. ⁶⁹⁶

When I hear music, I fear no danger. I am invulnerable. I see no foe. I am related to the earliest times, and to the latest. ⁶⁹⁷

My heart, which is so full to overflowing, has often been solaced and refreshed by music when sick and weary. ⁶⁹⁸

Play, listen, and love, day after day, until tomorrow, given that music a common thread in the fabric of humanity.

⁶⁹³ Hans Christian Andersen.

⁶⁹⁴ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

⁶⁹⁵ Robert Browning, *The complete poetical works of Browning*.

⁶⁹⁶ Maria von Trapp.

⁶⁹⁷ Henry David Thoreau.

⁶⁹⁸ Martin Luther.

“Put a sock in it,” is another of the last, *pipe down*, but suggest total silence, not just subdued but *snuffed-out* with the figurative *sock*, like, “Shut your *cake hole*,” or “Put a lid on it,” or “Clam-up!”

There are those voices, conversations of however many ways, that are welcomed, meaningful and even encouraging if just for the sense of it, a clear message that resonates. But then are (or is) the opposite; the droning-on, a track from Peanuts’ teacher, ⁶⁹⁹ or the kind that is doomed from the start with doubt and disregard, the source accepted as unreliable, perhaps intentionally so.

If only the acceptably unreliable could/would go away, those that dominate our *airways* and *pump-out*, often with seemingly endless repetition, “the news”, *fluff* accompanied by *fandango* to fill us finally with fear(s)—no room for courage, a foreign, forgotten word, let alone the actual conduct, while chaos and confusion run rampant. ⁷⁰⁰

The mass media serve as a system for communicating messages and symbols to the general populace. It is their function to amuse, entertain, and inform, and to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behavior that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society. In a world of concentrated wealth and major conflicts of class interest, to fulfil this role requires systematic propaganda. ⁷⁰¹

“Pedal to the metal,” means to accelerate; to go *wide-open*, “*warp*” *speed*, *all-the-way*, *push the envelope*, *red-line*.

⁶⁹⁹ From Peanuts’ cartoon (videos), the “Wah-Wah”.

⁷⁰⁰ Fear is as formidable as *soft force*, and is fueled by misinformation, intentionally misleading and ideologically malevolent; the end result, to mislead and manipulate the masses.

⁷⁰¹ Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*.

Pondering on points of POWER

In November of 2020, then President Trump offered the following regarding *Operation Warp Speed* ⁷⁰².

No medical breakthrough of this scope and magnitude has ever been achieved this rapidly, this quickly. And we're very proud of it, and I had tremendous help from the military — generals, admirals — and many of the great people at the White House...[and] is unequaled and unrivaled anywhere in the world.

And in such expediency, par excellence as described, was the record-breaking development and delivery of an experimental drug ⁷⁰³, presently dispensed to much of the public with increasing pressure imposed on all remaining..., with noted exceptions ⁷⁰⁴.

The average development timeline for the vaccine, including clinical tests and manufacturing, can take 8 to 12 years. Through *Operation Warp Speed*, we're doing it in less than 1 year. If you had a different administration with different people, what we've done would have taken, in my opinion, 3 to 5 years, and it would have been in the FDA forever.

In the words of the then President, "This is a very successful, amazing vaccine...," though it is experimental, the efficacy unproven, the adverse effects of no liability to/for the drug producers.

⁷⁰² From Wikipedia, **Operation Warp Speed** was a public-private partnership initiated by the United States government to facilitate and accelerate the development, manufacturing, and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostic, announced on May 15, 2020.

⁷⁰³ An **experimental drug** is approved for "testing" only—not for distribution—by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

⁷⁰⁴ Exceptions include all not yet "fully vaccinated" and segments of the population given exemption to include staff members of the Presidential Office and employees of the pharmaceutical producers of the drug.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“Running on 8...” or all cylinders, the accepted high(er) horsepower engines, insinuating much as the previous idiom, *fast as she’ll go* without any inhibitors, loss of compression and otherwise.

Again, *Operation Warp Speed*, setting not only a record-time to delivery but *leading the pack* by several laps—all prior drug development of this kind as *miles behind, left in the dust*.

And like the complexity of an engine, so too is the drug(s) from the anti-body therapies to the series of vaccines, the sequence not yet set or agreed to, though anticipated—as each new variant ushers in more countervailing measures, methods, and medications.

And more, to the complexity, is the confusion or uncertainty either because of limited information (or access to it), the details of the drug(s)…, the potential risks of ingesting an experimental drug as opposed the conventional approved one. Meanwhile,

The public does not ask the simple question: if vaccines are as safe as sugar water, why do the pharmaceutical companies need complete financial immunity and be protected by a battalion of lawyers from the US Department of Justice? ⁷⁰⁵

And in this, the full immunity of the manufacturers, is some contrast of manufacturers, the drug versus automobiles; for if the later produces a defective engine (underperforming, unreliable), are they liable, is there a warranty, does the customer a claim?

Recently, General Motors recalled the entire fleet ⁷⁰⁶ of Volts (electric compact) because two vehicles caught on fire, but meanwhile, many more persons are alleged to have died from the injection of the experimental drug, yet nothing has been done in kind, and what’s more, the producers are not at liable at all.

⁷⁰⁵ Dr. Judy Mikovits and Kent Hickenlivey, JD.

⁷⁰⁶ The number of recalls estimated at 75,000.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Pulling your leg,” (origin unknown), suggest that someone is joking/teasing/making something up; and in a verbal exchange, is a quip or wry remark. More intense on both sides of the exchange is (or would be) something like,

“They are forcing us to take the experimental drug,”
suggesting, implying, or followed by, “...with all the side-effects!”

And the reply, “You’re pulling my leg,” is hardly applicable given the gravity of the matter, the risk of the side-effects potentially outweighing the effects, the (presumed) cure worse than the illness.

There is POWER in words, of course, and in science—however the word and science are used—or abused—to a predetermined end. The manufacturing of perception is, intended or not, ill-contrived and potentially lethal to many, maybe most, while a relative few pull the strings—much more than just your leg.

It is far easier to concentrate power than to concentrate knowledge. That is why so much social engineering backfires and why so many despots have led their countries into disasters.⁷⁰⁷

With all the attendant costs, the misleading and misdirection—planned and purposed—is to draw-down *common sense*, plain reasoning and all that naturally provides and produces in and of *a thinking person*, a true soul with spirit, and finally, a creation of the true Creator, as a singular, salient, sanctioned being.

And though “despots” be allowed in the Creators sight, yet still, are we not each given power to see them for what they are... and are no; the arrogant and ambitious who hold no interest in you or me, *pulling our strings and your leg*, using, and abusing words, science and anything or anybody else they can and do exploit for their ends.

⁷⁰⁷ Thomas Sowell, *Intellectuals and Society*.

“When pigs fly,” (presumed to never to happen), whatever the “when”, often used to lighten or soften one’s response compared to, “Not until Hell freezes over,” as among the most staunch, stubborn.

Looking back over *the events* of the last year and, even now, yet more of that so often deemed “unprecedented” is indeed *a sight to behold*; that is, if they *do not get the best of us*, our seeking shelter with our shelter, curled-up like a babe too dependent to do anything beyond the bed or more, the confines of our worries and fears, the world as it is...changing at an accelerating pace, our nations spiraling downward as with all empires, extending to extinction or at least *the shell* of what it was once, expected, earned or exalted.

Looking forward may not seem the thing to look forward to; why, with all that awaits us, the implications of the Great Reset ⁷⁰⁸ and the harnessing—more the hanging—of human will, the exploitation of everything created for our good, used purposely for bad, wicked, and evil, as they emerge from the enclaves, their inner sanctum of superiority, self-denying and consequently self-deifying.

The process which, if not checked, will abolish Man goes on apace among Communists and Democrats no less than among Fascists. The methods may (at first) differ in brutality. But many a mild-eyed scientist in pince-nez, many a popular dramatist, many an amateur philosopher in our midst, means in the long run just the same as the Nazi rulers of Germany.... ⁷⁰⁹

⁷⁰⁸ From Wikipedia, the **Great Reset** is the name of the 50th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF), held in June 2020. It brought together high-profile business and political leaders, convened by Charles, Prince of Wales and the WEF, with the theme of rebuilding society and the economy in a sustainable way following the COVID-19 pandemic.

⁷⁰⁹ C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Pull yourself together,” means to get or take control of your emotions or actions after being very upset; a message fitting for the ongoing..., one’s troubles in *troubling times*, perceptions of *the now* and in that, presumptions of *that to come*.

Safety and security are heavy on *the mind*—or at least my mind—not because it is possible, achievable, or attainable, but because it is *runs* counter to courage in the present use, more the abuse, of those that constantly dangle it, *the carrot on the stick*, to push us ever closure to *the corral*, their control at our peril.

...traditional values are to be debunked' and mankind to be cut out into some fresh shape at the will (which must, by hypothesis, be an arbitrary will) of some few lucky people in one lucky generation which has learned how to do it. ⁷¹⁰

Where they or those that *dangle the carrot* see us each as nothing more than a mule or donkey to pull and to pack whatever the burden, however the brand, but stymied in any developed sense of self preservation save that damned carrot, safety, and security. ⁷¹¹

Who can argue against this fundamental need, want, to be safe, secure? Who can question the intent, the use of *a carrot*, that is an idea, an image, illusion, made up by the demented and diabolical skilled in engineering social control and conformity, manufacturing consent, and using (up) all for its own, while,

Foolish people laugh at things they do not understand, producing the sound of braying donkeys. ⁷¹²

⁷¹⁰ C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*.

⁷¹¹ Naturally, a donkey has a highly developed sense of self-preservation, making It difficult to force or frighten a donkey into doing something it sees as contrary to its own best interest or safety.

⁷¹² Wayne Gerard Trotman.

Oh, if only we could “**Put the clock back,**” reverse time and return to *the good old days* or at least *better times*—whenever that was, however we perceive it; *then* versus now, or worse, that to *come...*, the ever tightening of tyranny as necessary for world order.

And *that to come* is here already, resulting in the loss of jobs, the employed cut-out and cutdown by attrition, the ever tightening of the tyranny that robs one of the wages, first taxing them for what they earned and, as maddening as it be, taking away their means. ⁷¹³

There is no worse tyranny than to force a man to pay for what he does not want merely because you think it would be good for him.⁷¹⁴

And though the content of this page is thus far admittedly abstract, the core and concrete message is that the increasing demands imposed on the public to take an experimental drug, with or without recurring doses, is a classic case of expedience at any cost. ⁷¹⁵

...The Founding Fathers never intended a nation where citizens would pay nearly half of everything earned to [the state]. ⁷¹⁶

While one’s other half, life, and livelihood, is in the balance.

⁷¹³ Abusers of authority do not have to make sense, the underlying basis as always to acquire power, first by extracting taxes and second by reducing and eliminating one’s effort to earn an income.

⁷¹⁴ Robert A. Heinlein, *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress*.

⁷¹⁵ To recall, expedience is that *the end justifies the means*, and ⁷¹⁵ Abusers of authority do not have to make sense, the underlying basis as always to acquire power, first by extracting taxes and second by reducing and eliminating one’s effort to earn an income.

⁷¹⁵ Robert A. Heinlein, *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress*.

⁷¹⁵ To recall, **expedience** is that *the end justifies the means* and, with the drug producers given full legal immunity, means that the public bears the all costs whatever the effects of the drug(s).

⁷¹⁶ Ron Paul.

Pondering on points of POWER

A perfect follow-on from the previous page is, “**Outside the lines,**” or beyond an understood or accepted boundary, limit, guideline or other..., under scrutiny, maybe more.

But then those who have no *lines*, limits..., such unchecked or unlimited POWER is *a breeding ground* for corruption. Indeed,

When plunder becomes a way of life for a group of men in a society, over the course of time they create for themselves a legal system that authorizes it and a moral code that glorifies it. ⁷¹⁷

And then an unprincipled system devoid of *due process* and *the rule of law*, corrupted in and through arbitrary law and expedience at any cost, unbridled spending, public and private debt on/at an unprecedented scale without end—as it seems.

A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the people discover they can vote themselves largess out of the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority always votes for the candidate promising the most benefits from the public treasury, with the result....

Subsequently comes a dictatorship, a draconian system, emerging from the canalization of *the commons*, assets, to now include one’s ass, the greed and graft that make a grab for everything of value.

...that democracy always collapses over a loose fiscal policy--to be followed by a dictatorship. ⁷¹⁸

But not before a necessary but prescribed revolution,

One does not establish a dictatorship to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution to establish the dictatorship. ⁷¹⁹

To work *outside the lines*, the authority corrupt, criminal.

⁷¹⁷ Frédéric Bastiat.

⁷¹⁸ Alexander Fraser Tytler Woodhouselee.

⁷¹⁹ George Orwell, 1984.

“Out of hand,” poses the possibility of being, going, *outside the lines* but is more in the moment; a situation that seems to/by some perspective, as *out of control*, chaotic, possibly crazy.

Returning to a favorite film, *Hunt for Red October*, a scene aboard the carrier includes a fouled aircraft landing, an explosion followed by the fire teams’ arrival coupled with all the other action. Seconds into it, the ship’s captain, in a state expected, yells,

“This business will get out of control...it will get out of control, and we’ll be lucky to live through it.”

To ignore *the signs*, the conditions of chaos left unchecked or with unqualified response(s) that emerge, is courting disaster, a situation that is beyond *out of control*.

And more, as described in Chris Hedges *Empire of Illusions*, is the *ostrich in the sand*; were,

“People who shut their eyes to reality [will] simply invite their own destruction, and anyone who insists on remaining in a state of innocence long after that innocence is dead turns himself into a monster.” ⁷²⁰

Which, by “monster”, unable or unwilling to face “reality”, slipping from convenience to that of indirect cruelty, internally denying any culpability though, in truth, guilty of inaction and avoidance, *glossed over by* some inkling that: *things aren’t as bad as they seem*, “it” will get better, or this can’t go on forever.

Can it get worse; from a mishap to a crisis, *out of control* with many lives affected with immeasurable costs? Yes, it will get worse only because those that make such plans are able to carry through, always driven by their interest at our expense, with wicked and evil schemes, duplicitous, deceiving and being deceived.

⁷²⁰ James Baldwin.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Old school**,” refers to someone or something that is old-fashioned or traditional, often rigidly holding to practices viewed as out of vogue, bygone or *byzantine*, but proven.

These rotary dials were like meditation, they forced you to slow down and concentrate. If you polled the next number too soon, you had to start over from the top. ⁷²¹

And one is only fully able to comprehend her description given the actual experience, the comparatively laborious effort to dial versus punch, program (Contacts) and all the other *bells and whistles*.

There is some benefit to the “old rotary”; that as she suggests, it gave pause to really consider the call, who and why, and more, with every turn and wait, the value of it, the means, the mode, and the message; indeed, dialing a call was a process by comparison.

The standard push-button, often favoring earlier styles/sizes, changed everything, enabling one’s 10-key prowess to shine, the call sent in fractions of the rotary process; and still more, the arrival of *speed dial*. ⁷²² But *the beat* is constantly changing, accelerating, considering the endless features of the *smart phone* and a host of other *devices* customary to “ordinary life” whatever *the school*.

More, and downright invasive, is the arrival of bodily implants ⁷²³ for storing and transmitting data-information—and *god knows what*—for surveillance and even *mind-control* let alone the health risks, one’s so-called rights and liberties, and notions of freewill.

⁷²¹ Rainbow Rowell, *Landline*.

⁷²² From Wikipedia, **speed dial** is a function available on many telephone systems allowing the user to place a call by pressing a reduced number of keys. This function is particularly useful for phone users who dial certain numbers on a regular basis.

⁷²³ **Chip implants** can a unique ID number that can be linked to information contained in an external database.

“New hat,” is similar to *window-dress*, a superficial or cosmetic improvement, making someone or something “look good” but not much more when it comes to what really matters, value and worth. You can put lipstick on a pig but it’s still a pig.

The greatest challenge for you [is] how to window dress your sketchy personality.⁷²⁴

Though it is not uncommon for anyone at some time to *put on a mask*, to pretend to be something they’re not, to try to *keep up appearances* or pretentions, and to *window dress* themselves, *head to toe* and by all other means short of substance, who they really are.

Several administrations ago, then President Clinton was embroiled in a sex affair; one that, if the information is accurate, took place in the Oval Office with an aid. After first denying the affair and later, altering the definition of “sex”, Clinton was eventually, magically “made-better” per the phrase, “[He] is looking very presidential.”

Imagine the idea, as though needed, that any President must look “presidential,” or that they must, by some estimation, present themselves as worthy of the title, position and so forth? Short of imagination is a relevant quote by him.

If you live long enough, you’ll make mistakes. But if you learn from them, you’ll be a better person. It’s how you handle adversity, not how it affects you. The main thing is never quit, never quit, never quit.

Clinton had a longstanding reputation for such extra-marital affairs—suggesting that he had not learned or otherwise veered from infidelity, changed per his own words, to “be a better person.”

⁷²⁴ Et Imperatrix Noctem.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Once bitten, twice shy,” to mean that one who fails or is hurt is more careful or fearful about doing it (or something like it), again.

In a favorite song, “The First Cut is the Deepest,” ⁷²⁵ is such the case; a ballad of one that, carrying a deep “first cut”, is more than reluctant to love again, to care, to risk *opening an old wound*— with at least a portion of the pain to follow. But then,

Humanity tends to remember the abuses to which it has been subjected rather than the endearments. What’s left of kisses? Wounds, however, leave scars.⁷²⁶

And as to the possibilities or even the outcomes, opinions, and all, is it not better to *take things in balance*, the good with the bad, the right with the wrong, the deep or abiding love with *the cuts*? Given that betrayal is not with some degree of devotion, some commitment beyond the words only. Still,

It is easier to forgive an enemy than to forgive a friend.⁷²⁷

And it is hard to forgive someone when they continue to *twist the knife, gaslighting* ⁷²⁸, without the least hesitation, even with delight or any sense of wrongdoing, remorse, guilt, or shame as far removed, nonexistent.

But then, to the one who is hurt, cut-wounded, this is the only way—for anything else is everything less, swept into the abyss of bitterness, incurable brokenness without the capacity to love and be loved, Hard, yes, it is *hard as Hell*, but one must try to forgive another if they truly want to be better, not bitter, and released.

⁷²⁵ Yusuf Cat Stevens.

⁷²⁶ Bertolt Brecht.

⁷²⁷ William Blake.

⁷²⁸ **Gaslighting** is a specific type of manipulation where the manipulator is trying to get someone else (or a group of people) to question their own reality, memory, or perceptions.

“The other half,” may refer to marriage, the spouse or *significant other*, or it may refer to *the other half* of the matter, topic, one view versus another. Taking both into consideration, one view may hold *the glass may be half full* or the other, *half empty*, making for the double-use of “one half”, creating somewhat of a whole, made complete as something applied to marriage, a bond or commitment.

One *makes a vow* in marriage, promising for *richer or poorer, through sickness and in health....*, only to *break* the vow(s) for a “good” reason, justification or no. But who to say that such *vow breaking* is even necessary given divorce laws today? ⁷²⁹ Indeed, vows or commitments are devalued given the leeway of contemporary law, case after case, rendering first a massive increase in divorce (1970s – 90s), followed by a steady decline in marriage, presently at an all-time low per capita. ⁷³⁰

What becomes of a culture where marriage is *on the ropes*? This sort of thing is not new; that is, marriage and family at substantial risk measured in (or by) numerous statistics from unwed births to increased crime rates—especially among youth. What is new however is this institution, marriage, is dying a slow death and, unless it changes, will surely result in the dying of society, its strength, in the vital balance of POWERS that counter the state. And if/as this decline continues, this strength will continue to transfer to the state which means ever growing oppression and every tightening control, eliminating any notions of individual rights, liberty.

⁷²⁹ **Divorce laws** enable unilateral (or nonconsensual) divorce as well as *no-fault* divorce—which essentially removes any cause or justification for divorce other than *irreconcilable differences* or more to the point, because one and/or other are not happy.

⁷³⁰ Statistics and source noted previously, marriage per capita is current at a record low.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Over & above,” continued loss of liberty leads to a draconian society, ⁷³¹ one far removed..., the regime as *over & above* any prior, countervailing forces such as the conventional family or the middle class. Sadly, and to the demise of any democracy, this draconian society is creeping ever closer, around, among and within us each; and beginning with children, this training—more indoctrination—is already here, and,

Our textbooks on political science and economics are obsolete. Our nation has been hijacked by oligarchs, corporations, and a narrow, selfish, political, and economic elite, a small and privileged group that governs, and often steals, on behalf of moneyed interests. ⁷³²

And money, *the love of money*, is indeed *the root of all evil*.

But there is more to this, the losses incomplete. For what has been (and is) done is among the greatest and grandest of all deception; that,

In the name of patriotism and democracy, in the name of all the values that were once part of the American system and defined the Protestant work ethic, has systematically destroyed our manufacturing sector, looted the treasury, corrupted our democracy, and trashed the financial system.

While

During this plundering we remained passive, mesmerized by the enticing shadows on the wall, assured our tickets to success, prosperity, and happiness were waiting around the corner.

Rather than acting..., *over & above* our comforts, convenience.

⁷³¹ **Draconian** means of laws or their application excessively harsh and severe.

⁷³² Chris Hedges, *Empire of Illusion: The End of Literacy and the Triumph of Spectacle*.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“Over the top,” is yet another of those among *crossing the line, going too far, or beyond the point of no return*. And following from the last page, has the nation, our culture, gone *over the top*?

The moral nihilism of celebrity culture is played out on reality television shows, most of which encourage a dark voyeurism into other people's humiliation, pain, weakness, and betrayal.⁷³³

If only television was “the problem”, but it is more a symptom of deeper problems; a *lost ship*, foundering, beyond recovery, which has no fleet or otherwise *friends at sea* to offer rescue. Indeed, the culture has surrendered any moral basis of absolutes and thus,

People today are trying to hang on to the dignity of man, but they do not know how to, because they have lost the truth that man is made in the image of God... We are watching our culture put into effect the fact that when you tell men long enough that they are machines, it soon begins to show in their actions. You see it in our whole culture—in the theater of cruelty, in the violence in the streets, in the death of man in art and life.⁷³⁴

And then, more specific to the absolutes, is that,

The basic problem of the Christians in this country in the last eighty years or so, regarding society and in regard to government, is that they have seen things in bits and pieces instead of totals.

Which is to say, as possibly too abstract, *the larger canvass* whereby, among truths of history, that nations come and go, rise, and fall, and however well intended, are apt to abuse POWERS if left unchecked, if left unguarded, such that *over the top* is relative too; that what was morally wrong, wicked, or evil, is *passe*, plausible, even popular.

⁷³³ Chris Hedges.

⁷³⁴ Francis A. Schaeffer, *Escape from Reason: A Penetrating Analysis of Trends in Modern Thought*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“On a silver platter,” shares the “silver” of, *born with a silver spoon in their mouth*; and, to carry the theme of privilege, is that one receives or achieves something with little or no effort.

“If I find out you’re lying, I’ll come back for you! Your head will be on a silver platter, and I will gorge on your neurons!”⁷³⁵

As a rather graphic way of warning that any such lie(s) come with a strong, fierce penalty.

Demands, procedures and protocol of the justice system do not place anything remotely close to that from *Prisoners of Wars*; indeed, perjury does not really *have its place* in my experience(s) of *the courts*—giving *open range* to a witness apt to lie, making allegations to *left and right* unrestrained, unaccountable, with impunity.

At one point, I complained to a Florida judge that I was astonished to an expert witness lying on the stand. I thought one had to tell the truth in court. I thought if someone didn’t, she didn’t get her milk and cookies. I thought God came down and plucked someone right out of the witness stand if he lied in court. I thought a lying expert witness would step out of court and get hit by a bus.

But not so, at least in this case, as

A wiser woman than I, the judge’s answer was, “Silly you”.⁷³⁶

And the *hard lesson* of experience is that the courts simply do not care about lies (slander) except in the interest of the state; wherein the whole of it changes, the *POWER of perjury* comes to the fore and *heads roll* as the state decides the who and how, called-out, called-down, prosecuted as a criminal—on a rare occasion, for reasons that understandably defy all principle, *the rule of law*.

⁷³⁵ Sarah Gracia, *Prisoners of War*.

⁷³⁶ “Confessions of a Whistle-Blower: Lessons Learned Author”: Anna C. Salter. *Ethics & Behavior*, Volume 8, Issue 2 June 1998.

“...**with a sliver**,” to continue, the implications of this precious metal and the privilege poured out for those who pour out lies.

Not that lies or lying is *anything new under the sun*, though attention to this offense is arbitrary and attenuated—even silenced—by the media or more accurately, those *behind it*. Thus, any witness given the leeway to lie, granted such POWER, potentially condemns another well short of any morality or supposed ethics. But still,

We must know something about malevolence, about how to recognize it, and about how not to make excuses for it. We must know that we cannot expect fair play.⁷³⁷

While lawyers will advise, even insist, that their clients *go for it*; testify with “creative elaboration”—the purpose of which is to malign and potentially implicate another on their testimony alone—while ideally squashing any rebuttal assuming that “the accused” is even given a chance to testify in their defense. It's *a perfect storm* for the unsuspecting; one who must endure such testimony—knowing it be false, falsified, but unable to illicit any interest from the courts on the matter. Such *foul play* disempowers the defendant while dismissing any potential for “a fair trial” (or much more often, a *plea bargain*) played out as a case *doomed from the start*, presumed guilty, invariably, and inarguably convicted on *a shred* of evidence concocted by/through counsel that stops to slander among other insidiousness left to their devices. There is hope however in that such false testimony does not ultimately go unchecked but, as time permits, the truth be revealed however well it serves those subjected to such..., ill-conceived, corrupt, and even criminal but finally immoral—as though it matters.

⁷³⁷ Anna C. Salter.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Out of sight...**,” is sometimes followed by *out of mind*, the two as one like *this too we soon be forgotten*, or that a person stops thinking about something or someone if he or she does not see them, it. .

Who misses what they have never, ever even imagined? ⁷³⁸

But to go further, who misses what they have led to believe is not good from them or, taking it further, is not good at all?

The advantage of a false witness, presuming that they *get away with it*, is not only a malevolence *make-over*, but is also the potential to continue, lies begetting lies, and thus POWER perpetuated. The problem is obviously that it may not work, this behavior, giving rise to any number of costs—not the least of which is a disposition of complete distrust among previous, prior family and friends.

I'm not upset that you lied to me, I'm upset that from now on I can't believe you. ⁷³⁹

And though there is the reality that no single relationship among us is completely trustworthy, what does stand-out here is the *motive behind the means and method*; that habitual liars are inclined to *use* anyone, everyone, *making-up their story* as the go, and like a bee, passing from bud to bud—though *the honey* be bitter, laced with bile, a behavior most unbecoming, *a festering sting full of shit*.

Among the *bud to bud*, a pox of sort, the liar's real intentions can go for some time before this behavior *rises to the surface*, the reality is revealed, and the *dark nature* of one thought trustworthy is seen for what it is—and is not—*no honey of any sweet*.

⁷³⁸ N.K. Jemisin, *The Fifth Season*.

⁷³⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche.

“...**Out of mind**,” to follow-on from the previous page, *out of sight, out of mind*.

Yes, love does hurt and, in the betrayal of love (more trust), that much more is *the hurting*, their feelings, *heavy*, while *the betrayer*, indifferent or more, gleeful, glad, *full of their own shit*.

Much has already been presented on the possibility that a habitual liar, among other behaviors of control and manipulation, is desensitized; any heartfelt loss(-es) long seared by some nascent abnormalities that *give no quarter* to the *bleeding heart* but, again, fashion everyone as a *pawn to be played*. And in this, *the game*, is the strong possibility of some *out of mind* experience: first, that *the pawn* might *go berserk*, overcome, outed, or outmatched; and second, that the betrayer *moves (on to) the next piece*, continued cheating and stealing in the mist of lies and again, without remorse, regret.

To forgive or not forgive, that is the question. Victims of abuse have been hurt in so many ways it makes it hard to forgive. Holding [on to] the injury bonds us to the abuser, forgiving makes you stronger and sets you free of that hurt.⁷⁴⁰

And to ensure that each role is clear, *the pawn* is the actual victim in this relationship—whatever or whomever *the betrayer* pretends.... Yes, *the betrayer* who pretends to be “the victim”—as yet another lie—giving “victim” a bad name while *cashing-in* on the court systems’ protections of such cases, crimes. To *play the victim card*, is about as low as anyone or anything can go whether it is a nation that carries out naked aggression as pretense of a defensive reaction or a person who exploits the system of protections, abusing the law(s) aimed to aid the abused, exploiting, and enervating *lady justice*.

⁷⁴⁰ Tracy Malone.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Outbreak**,” as almost if not always to imply danger (e.g., disease-virus, lawlessness-chaos, contention-conflict).

As this book proceeds, and as perhaps part of the impetus, is the continuing pandemic and it’s prevailing, intensifying of controls of authority amid altering attitudes, actions, and acrimony.

The frightening assaults of pandemic terror have vastly increased our vulnerability. At the outset, hope and humor were able to alleviate the sabotage of our living together, until bit by bit, the raging roars and the thundering crashes of the death toll called the shots. The ground zero of our mental structure must inevitably make us remold another thinking pattern. ⁷⁴¹

Ideally, some good comes..., some reconnection with the things *that really matter*; family, friends, community and above all, courage to face such circumstances, conditions, and consequences.

As of late however, “the good” is ground down; indeed, the social strength is eroding (further), persons pitted against persons in the Romanesque method of *divide and conquer* ⁷⁴².

We have a chance to do something extraordinary. As we head out of this pandemic, we can change the world. Create a world of love. A world where we are kind to each other.... A world we don't judge those at the food bank because that may be us if things were just slightly different.... ⁷⁴³

But how much of a chance do we have..., is determined by how much courage we possess; the willingness to sacrifice for the good of others—and especially for the growing powerless that are on target for aims of the Great Reset, the new order, the fourth revolution.

⁷⁴¹ Erik Pevernagie.

⁷⁴² **Divide and conquer** is the policy of maintaining control over one's subordinates or opponents by encouraging dissent between them, thereby preventing them from uniting in opposition.

⁷⁴³ Johnny Corn.

“Lockdown,” comes now, well intended to follow *outbreak*, the pandemic producing a litany of continuing conditions, constraints, and criminality seemingly aimed to lessen the cases of the illness, the statistics wherever and however rooted or refuted, the controversy of the PCR testing⁷⁴⁴ far outmatched by the contention and conflict over “the vaccine” from the expedient delivery, diluted effect and dangerous side-effects, to the intended purpose(s), stated or surmised given the source(s) ⁷⁴⁵.

Lockdowns, euphemized as *shelter in place*, is but one of the conditions that, taken as a whole, has shutdown businesses, churches, schools (at all levels, public and private), with noted exceptions determined as either “essential” but otherwise *above the law*—some of which have greatly benefitted/profited from *the whole affair*. But then, *the whole affair* is not the whole story.

- “W.H.O. Officials Call Pandemic 'Inevitable.'”
- “Study Shows U.S. Ill-Equipped for Major Pandemic.”
- “Dysfunctional Health Care System Would Doom Millions, Doctors Say.”
- “Catastrophe Worse Than Katrina, Some Experts Fear.”

Cole clicked and clicked. There were thousands of articles, more than anyone could ever read. Cole was surprised so many of them were from long ago, way back before 2000. ⁷⁴⁶

⁷⁴⁴ The **PCR test**, as developed in the 1980s, comes with some understanding of a mis-application to the present purpose: this test (form of testing) was never intended by its inventor to be used for such an application and thus lends to dubious results; and while who know what is being blasted into the ethos, could the caution of this scientist be reason enough to question the efficacy of the test(testing)?

⁷⁴⁵ **Source(s)** include, at the least, state agencies, advisory and executive, along with the drives..., the developers of the drug as well as hot of other organizations profiting from the program(s).

⁷⁴⁶ Sigrid Nunez, *Salvation City*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Out on the town,” as to *going-out...down-town...or uptown*, or into the city presumably to shop, dine and/or engage in some forms of entertainment.

As restrictions, such as a *lockdown*, come to both consideration and then fruition, what is becoming increasingly clear—but not surprising—is that persons or places of POWER are given an exception, privileges beyond status quo. Yes, this is all true in such times; that as *the weight of the heavy hand* and *the reach of the long arm* grows for (toward) the masses, a relative few continue their jaunts, diversions, and excursions, unchecked and unbound.

In despotism the systems are there to protect the privileged and oppress the underprivileged.⁷⁴⁷

The timeless truth is here again, as it always was; POWER demands privilege while the powerless are oppressed under such regimes as that *rearing its ugly head* here and elsewhere.⁷⁴⁸

Testing the assertion of a despotic rise is done by considering the rise of the *fear-factor*; the greater the intensity of fear spawned and fomented by the state, the more the despotism, tyranny.

Fear is the State's psychological weapon of choice to frighten citizens into sacrificing their basic freedoms and rule-of-law protections in exchange for the security promised by their all-powerful government.⁷⁴⁹

And while a few go about their lives, protected by/in “their all-powerful government”, an increasing number, reaching epic levels, will encumber the *heavy hand* and *long arm* of the state.

⁷⁴⁷ Mecha Constantine.

⁷⁴⁸ Despotic or tyrannical rule is a consequence of increased central planning, concentrated authority—as opposed to balances of power.

⁷⁴⁹ Philip G. Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil*.

“Up (down) town,” as a continuation of the previous, *out on the town*, more on the class war and in particular, the growing division of wealth, the rich getting richer and all that remains, poorer. Reminiscent of the *Gilded Age*, the gap ⁷⁵⁰, the distribution of wealth, is of such difference that the possibility of another *Great Depression* is upon us, a foregone conclusion.

Analogous as more a sense than something necessarily measurable or quantifiable, is the state’s ties and links to big business—the kind of relationship that wreaks of fascism.

The great enemy of freedom is the alignment of political POWER with wealth. This alignment destroys the commonwealth—that is, the natural wealth of localities and the local economies of household, neighborhood, and community - and so destroys democracy, of which the commonwealth is the foundation and practical means.⁷⁵¹

That where Fascism (or its like) prevails, so too the *double-trouble*, an abuse of powers, not additive but multiplied, thus rendering ill-effects that prevent even *trickle-down economics*—if that were ever plausible.⁷⁵² And the result: the wealthy are exempt from the state’s authority, not just regarding liability, but also law, criminality, coined so aptly, “Too big to fail, too big to jail”.

⁷⁵⁰ "The top 10% of the wealth distribution—the purple and green areas together—hold a large and growing share of U.S. aggregate wealth, while the bottom half (the thin red area) hold a barely visible share," Fed economists write in a paper outlining the inequality... <https://www.forbes.com/sites/pedrodacosta/2019/05/29/americas-humungous-wealth-gap-is-widening-further/?sh=57f0403942ee>.

⁷⁵¹ Wendell Berry, *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays*.

⁷⁵² From Wikipedia, **trickle-down economics** is the economic proposition that taxes on businesses and the wealthy in society should be reduced to stimulate business investment in the short term and benefit society at large in the long term.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Get around town,” is more of at least the last previous pages; that POWER, measured as wealth, enables more..., which means that there is less for the balance of humanity, class, or no class. To *get around town* might match a “man about town”, a worldly and socially active person, one known and recognized for good or bad, or both....

Is it good for those that have more to get more, regardless of the method and means, *by hook or crook*? More specific to the matter at hand, *the gap* in wealth amid disparities, is exemption and exclusivity for those *above the law*, with power galore. And yet,

Those born to wealth, and who have the means of gratifying every wish, know not what is the real happiness of life, just as those who have been tossed on the stormy waters of the ocean on a few frail planks can alone realize the blessings of fair weather.⁷⁵³

To consider Ecclesiastes' *human condition*⁷⁵⁴; all is futile, *a chasing after the wind*, as detailed by one wise, and immensely wealthy.

But again, the trappings of money (possessions); that the *love...is the root of all evil*,⁷⁵⁵ to consider that having so much is never enough, not sufficient or satisfying, and in no way good (to answer the earlier question). And yet it continues, rising to levels that boggle the mind let alone beguile many more who wonder why and for how long, still *blessed are the poor...*

⁷⁵³Alexandre Dumas, *The Count of Monte Cristo*.

⁷⁵⁴ **Human condition** or experience, as summarized in 3:18–20 as: I also said to myself, “As for humans, God tests them so that they may see that they are like the animals. Surely the fate of human beings is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both: As one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath; humans have no advantage over animals. Everything is meaningless. All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return.

⁷⁵⁵ 1 Timothy 6:10.

“Talk of the town,” is simply what dominates discussion and dialogue, true, false, or more likely somewhere in between.

Suppose that that *talk of the town*—the whole country or perhaps the world—is held to the pandemic, all matters of the current variant, anything, and everything predictable, possible—if not happening, simulated or actual, pronounced or proclaimed.

No one can reasonably deny that the pandemic is not real, reality, though one can certainly consider the matter(s); the information that is flowed (controlled, censored, debunked and shutdown), the source(s) and plans designed for our future, actions and reactions, pressures, *problems, pains, and pleasures*.

Naturally, all the talk is met with a mix of reactions, but seldom if ever do we hear that we must be courageous or otherwise, allay our fears. Indeed, the only basic sense that can be claimed from all this talk, actions/reactions, is fear—and all that POWER gained and lost during it—lending to yet more questions and doubts as to messages, methods of delivery, and the means that exclude contractions often couched as *conspiracy theory* (a.k.a. foolishness).

What becomes of a country that censors contradictory or critical content is tyranny, *the closing of the mind*, and the punishment of all alleged ⁷⁵⁶ as *enemies of the state* or by any other name, claim.

Once a government is committed to the principle of silencing the voice of opposition, it has only one way to go, and that is down the path of increasingly repressive measures, until it becomes a source of terror to all its citizens and creates a country where everyone lives in fear.⁷⁵⁷

⁷⁵⁶ A conviction is not necessary, but all that required is to merely accuse or charge, with detainment indefinite de facto imprisonment.

⁷⁵⁷ Harry Truman, Special Message to the Congress on the Internal Security of the United States, August 8, 1950.

Pondering on points of POWER

“On the same page,” or to agree, to hold to the same opinion or belief, or unanimity among a group.

The whole idea of a shared belief is strength of course, a common cause, desire, purpose, but it is also useful for guiding, directing and, to an extreme, first manipulating...but then manifesting as demagogue, draconian, and despotic.

The smart way to keep people passive and obedient is to strictly limit the spectrum of acceptable opinion but allow very lively debate within that spectrum....⁷⁵⁸

Creating the illusion of an *open society* (when in fact it is restricted, relegated, and regulated to our every feeling, thought.

Groups and organizations place degrees of “acceptable behavior”—what is allowed or tolerated—using a basis of *what they believe*, often written down and carried forth, learned, and ideally understood, and possibly well intended for each and all, the individual and the group. Doubts and disobedience by persons are also met in degrees from admonition to probation or, as matters carry much weight, dismissal or even death.

Leaders or administration may indeed have the interest of everyone, expressing this care in a myriad of ways not the least of which is *seeing after their needs* and interceding when problems persist, protract, and appear irresolute.

But, on the other side, are leaders that see *the group* as merely a tool, a means to an end, without one iota of interest in/for them except at it serves the leader’s interest, ambitions, and advancement.

Any fool can make a rule
And any fool will mind it.⁷⁵⁹

⁷⁵⁸ Noam Chomsky, *The Common Good*.

⁷⁵⁹ Henry David Thoreau, Journal #14.

"Different worlds," is one that figuratively suggest two completely differing views, perspectives, or positions, often applied to lifestyle in general or, sometimes to an issue, a matter of/belief.

Political science has still to account for such facts as two nations attacking one another, each convinced that is acting in self-defense, or two classes at war each certain that it speaks for the common interest. They live, we are likely to say, in *different worlds*. More accurately, they live in the same world, but they think and feel in different ones.⁷⁶⁰

And in the present, here, and now, is the often voiced or verbalized desire for a return to normalcy, "The way things were before..." with added commentary on how it can/should happen—if it can happen at all. There are differing views, as expected, but always the desire however imaginative or illusive, *normalcy*, not to leave out some conclusion or critique of/for "the new normal".

Civilized life, you know, is based on a huge number of illusions in which we all collaborate willingly. The trouble is we forget after a while that they are illusions and we are deeply shocked when reality is torn down around us.⁷⁶¹

And any/all evidence of a dying culture, the loss of liberties and the end to all absolutes, is *nothing new under the sun*; for in fact, despots and their ilk have existed for ages, levying terrible and tyrannical behavior on others—from the most local, say a family, to the outmost regions, territories and even nations, one to the other. Yes, here is notions of *normal*, that which we perceive, play to, among *different worlds* from the highest to the lowest in terms of POWER, position, and possession. Some may think they have *the world by the tail*, but in this are fools as well, basking in *the sun* of their banal beliefs.

⁷⁶⁰ Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion*.

⁷⁶¹ J. G. Ballard.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Off the record**,” can mean news, information, data, or financials; reported or released with discretion, sometime secretly or “securely”, disclosed whether directed..., or by one’s decision. In a statement of this kind, intended to be *kept close*, one might say,

“Off the record, I can’t see how this can happen,” thinking that it might cause controversy, conflict or more, *if it gets out* or is released, found out, and *ends up in the wrong hands*.

And this goes..., whether two students passing messages (updated, *texting*), or *up the ladder* of POWERS with potentially many “secrets” to protect, all manner of methods clandestine, covert. ⁷⁶²

One form, *off the record*, is the *off the books*’ expenditures or *Black Budget* of the state, but beyond that, on an international scale, is/are conduct—with criminal implications—*off the charts*.

A global financial cabal engineered a fraudulent housing and debt bubble [2008], illegally shifted vast amounts of capital out of the US; and used ‘privatization’ as a form of piracy - a pretext to move government assets to private investors at below-market prices and then shift private liabilities back to government at no cost to the private liability holder Clearly, there was a global financial coup d’état underway.⁷⁶³

Whereas *the S&L crisis* ⁷⁶⁴ was one *for the books*, valued at \$1.5B, *the housing bubble*, estimated at \$13T, failed to jail practically anyone.

⁷⁶² Debatably a form of lying, withholding information under oath or by obligation, is a force-multiplier of power; the element of surprise, *cloak and dagger*, “vital security”, and other public and private reasons for *off the record*.

⁷⁶³ Catherine Austin Fitts.

⁷⁶⁴ From Wikipedia, the **savings and loan crisis** of the 1980s and 1990s (commonly dubbed the S&L crisis) was the failure of 1,043 out of the 3,234 savings and loan associations (S&Ls) in the United States from 1986 to 1995.

“Broken record,” may have lost some relevance (given the resurgence of vinyl records) but might just as well have returned, the meaning as words repeated, over, over again (as with record player when a scratch, the player-needle skips...).

Repeating a thing does not make it any more true or real, and yet the media (or those that control it) is renowned for *carrying* a story from *here to Timbuctoo*, coordinating it with all the networks from regional to the national nay, international outlets, to *blast* the public—on the premise that the ubiquity, frequency, and intensity will somehow shape opinion, *no questions asked*. And to understand why or how this is done, the mass distribution of misinformation or disinformation, is to acknowledge or accept that,

...the mainstream media’s language has failed us, it has not been telling us what we really need to know, because their language marches in step with that of the bankers, warmongers, oppressors, and executioners.⁷⁶⁵

“Today, a story is not told [but] it’s sold,”⁷⁶⁶ and again, *he who pays the piper names the tune*.

That the media has been *bought-out* is yet another *notch in bedpost* of the wealthy, the powerful, who aim to control *the masses* with force of either the “soft” or hard, brutal, violent, and deadly.

Otherwise, the media will depart from elite consensus only rarely and in limited ways. Even when large parts of the public break free of the premises of the doctrinal system..., real understanding...can be developed only with considerable effort by the most diligent and skeptical.⁷⁶⁷

⁷⁶⁵ Louis Yako.

⁷⁶⁶ Amit Abraham.

⁷⁶⁷ Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Off the hook**,” means that’s someone (or somebody) is no longer in trouble, perhaps released..., whether charged or not. To be *let off the hook* confers that once in trouble, with any variety of punitive measures to follow..., all is well, *case closed*.

In an interview on Peak Prosperity ⁷⁶⁸ in November of 2015, with book author Bill Black, ⁷⁶⁹ entitled, “Why the Banksters are Winning,” regarding *white-collar* criminality in the banking system, and specifically the *housing bubble* crisis.

They are literally in the face of HSBC hundreds of thousands of separate felons. And you would expect in those circumstances that you would get prosecutions of both the senior officers and of the corporation. You make the play. Then what happens when you do not prosecute? Well we now see. You get massive positivism. In other words, they will keep committing the crimes unless you are pulling about the fines.

And when the *moral hazard* ⁷⁷⁰ is removed from the matter(s), what is left but, like a *broken record*; high crimes certain to continue, cycle, and in his words, to ensure “massive recidivism”.

Yes, they live in very *different worlds*; exempt from much authority, potentially unlimited in their affairs regardless of the costs, public and private, in close facsimile to what Adam Smith ⁷⁷¹called “the vile maxim of the masters of mankind”.

⁷⁶⁸ **Peak Prosperity** is a Web-based started and operated by Chris Martenson, PhD, dealing with matters of energy, the economy, and the environment at www.peakprosperity.com.

⁷⁶⁹ From Wikipedia, William “**Bill**” **Black** is an American lawyer, academic, author, and a former bank regulator. Black’s expertise is in white-collar crime, public finance, regulation, and other topics in law and economics.

⁷⁷⁰ **Moral hazard** is the lack of incentive to guard against risk where one is protected from its consequences, e.g. by insurance.

⁷⁷¹ Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*.

“Off on the wrong...” ends with “foot”, almost if not always; from the start or beginning, *things look bad* or, in among some quarters, the mission is in jeopardy, *doomed* or *designed to fail*.

The basics of such *off on the wrong foot* is that the other *foot* (or alternative) was the “right” choice, the best if not only option. But then there may be other options too, even in this idiom, such as to wait or watch, assess the situation further, and belay any *foot* action, seemingly for a better time, with less risks, more certainties.

For as long as there have been feet, there has been the “wrong” *foot*; the one too quick or too slow, too low, or too high, but based on the outcome or effect, is simply the “bad” start/move that brings trouble [that could have (or should have) been avoided]—with all that is left in the learning if that is to be, plausible, probable.

Imperfect as we are, *making a wrong move* is simply a way of life, ideally learning from any fault or failures that result. Failure or losing, while disdained in *many circles*, is solidly shown to be the best lesson, difficult but decidedly determined to teach a lesson.

Few prefer to be, or to commit, wrong, to fail, to lose; shouldering the shame, humiliated, whether we are to blame or any other. Add to this... betrayal, and what becomes of the betrayed, likely downhearted and dejected, but more susceptible to bitterness, unamended brokenness? But then,

God uses broken things. It takes broken soil to produce a crop, broken clouds to give rain, broken grain to give bread, broken bread to give strength. It is the broken alabaster box that gives forth perfume. It is [the disciple] Peter, weeping bitterly, who returns to greater power than ever.⁷⁷²

Brokenness is beneficial and necessary for becoming....

⁷⁷² Vance Havner.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Over the moon,” means to be elated, delighted, extremely or blissfully happy.

There is much ado about being happy, *happiness*, as a measure of one’s wants, needs and all in between; that *happiness* is not just a moment, here or there, but is pursued, a process without end—but expected! In this illusion, *happiness* is the duty of others, their responsibility to deliver, though simply not possible whomever.

But then *joy*, distinctly different from happiness, more than momentary but not necessarily as dazzling; it is more a *fixed star* than a *comet*, vanishing into the dark, brilliant to burn-out.

A baby cries and is clearly not happy (the possibility of *joy* not yet present within or visible to others). Cared for and nurtured, a child grows and ages, reaching maturity where *joy* and *happiness* are distinctly different, as idea for everyone. *Happiness* is fleeting, woefully overrated, but *joy* is a gift that holds in the worst of times, *the valley*, and *dark places* of life.

Somewhere or among some, maybe more, are those who are still developing or are delayed indefinitely; often self-centric, determined that happiness is *the bomb* of prolonged if not permanent, exploding effect, such persons will go to great ends to find and maintain happiness—lapsing into a funk if not a fearsome state should it not be so—their lives the envy of others. Like, or as, an infantile, such persons measure their pursuits or pleasures with such intensity as to seldom enjoy the moment, take in the present or, worst of all, refuse to endure pain, suffering, grief, in the certain sorrows of life.

Sometimes one has suffered enough to have the right to never say: I am so happy. ⁷⁷³

But for the insufferable, why, they just keep whining and crying.

⁷⁷³ Alexandre Dumas, *The Black Tulip*.

“On top of the world,” is like *over the moon*, a moment of bliss, elation, and all that.

In 1972, a family band called “The Carpenters” composed and recorded the song, “Top of the World,” ⁷⁷⁴ that became a No. 1 single the following year. The song begins,

Such a feelin's comin' over me
There is wonder in most every thing I see
Not a cloud in the sky, got the sun in my eyes
And I won't be surprised if it's a dream

Everything I want the world to be
Is now comin' true especially for me
And the reason is clear, it's because you are here
You're the nearest thing to heaven that I've seen

And in keeping with this theme, the song includes “happiness”, noting “if you are here,” to confirm *love* as key, necessary.

For those old enough, the tragedy of this duo, brother-sister, is that Karen later died from anorexia, an eating disorder. ⁷⁷⁵ Clearly successful and talented, and uncommonly wholesome for the era, she struggled..., subjecting her body to a diet that would in inevitably end her life, and in the contrast of the song's theme, the perception, and pretensions. Yes, *happiness* sales, sounds good, but it does not deliver, producing a blast to bedazzle but fading fast, failing to last.

⁷⁷⁴ From Wikipedia, “Top of the World” is a 1972 song written and composed by Richard Carpenter and John Bettis and first recorded by American pop duo Carpenters. It was a Billboard Hot 100 No. 1 hit for the duo for two consecutive weeks in 1973.

⁷⁷⁵ At the age of 32, Carpenter died of heart failure due to complications from anorexia nervosa, which was little-known at the time, and her death led to increased visibility and awareness of eating disorders. Her work continues to attract praise, including appearing on Rolling Stone's 2010 list of the 100 greatest singers of all time.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Lick-e-ty split**,” or at great speed whatever the action, this brings-to-mind a moment, the script, of the warden in the film, *The Shawshank Redemption* ⁷⁷⁶. Yes, as another of my favorite films, *lick-e-ty split* is particularly intriguing given the methodical nature of the main character, Andy, and *his story* to include the warden as another of authorities *gone bad*—appearing and publicly packaged as a saint of sort, though in truth as crooked as they come, layer after layer.

To understand the concept of the warden’s POWER is to consider first his enduring role; possibly 30 years at Shawshank, his rule ending shortly after Andy’s escape, suicide as the easy way out. ⁷⁷⁷ Exploitation is the rule without exception, all manner of *white-collar* crime; the orchestration of murder of who knows how many—beyond *the racket* developed and directed by Andy under duress. ⁷⁷⁸

This story, the prison, displays the despot; one with supreme, seemingly unchecked power, playing the part of “good”, fair, and just. Taken together, the warden and his captain, the “colossal prick,” have “an arrangement” while Andy is swept-up in the scandal, *keeping the books*, doing tax returns for dozens of staff, and ensuring that the crooked enterprise is kept secret within the system, beneath contempt and above the law.

⁷⁷⁶ From Wikipedia, **The Shawshank Redemption** is a 1994 American drama film written and directed by Frank Darabont, based on the 1982 Stephen King novella *Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption*.

⁷⁷⁷ In the book by Stephen King, there are a series of wardens over the same era, unlike the film where there is only one.

⁷⁷⁸ The warden is both a hypocrite and a heretic, posing as a Christian yet possessing a cruel and criminal conduct, appearing to the public as a trusted figure while committing a long list of capital crimes from extortion to laundering of monies atop the arranged murders. Finally found out by authorities per Andy’s actions, launching an investigation and warrants, the warden commits suicide.

“Splitting hairs,” or exaggerating distinctions between things when the differences between them are so small, incidental.

Do not underestimate the “warden” type; those who *rule with an iron hand* all the while appearing saintly, *squeaky clean*, but *full of shit*—self-absorbed and ego-enthralled—their heart seared from any goodwill, sincerity, and compassion.

Clearly the warden was *above* the inmates and his staff, (to include *the colossal prick*), and from this place *atop the world*, can outwit *the system* through his exploitations of POWER and, above all, the arrival of a “smart banker”, Andy. But the extremes of the warden’s abuses are much more than merely *white-collar crimes*; indeed, this man is demented, possessed to the point of being *overpowered by power*, driving Andy to near starvation—using “the Sodomites” as surety of Andy’s submission, silence.

No *splitting hairs* when it comes to the match-up of these two men: the warden, possessed by power, the end justifying the means; and Andy, bound by bars and in effect forced to commit crimes that he never would have thought of before, on *the outside*, let alone condoned.

My conscience is the killjoy of my greed. But my greed is the killer of my life. Any questions? ⁷⁷⁹

And (a) conscience, like hope, is a good thing.

A Native American elder once described his own inner struggles in this manner: “Inside of me there are two dogs. One of the dogs is mean and evil. The other dog is good. The mean dog fights the good dog all the time.” When asked which dog wins, he reflected for a moment and replied, “The one I feed the most.” ⁷⁸⁰

⁷⁷⁹ Craig D. Lounsbrough.

⁷⁸⁰ George Bernard Shaw.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Space cadet**,” is one not heard since I was a kid..., perceived as a person who is *out of touch* with reality, aloof, scatter-brained.

In a book, *Space Cadet*, Robert A. Heinlein ⁷⁸¹ writes:

Men on the surface of a planet are as helpless against men in spaceships as a man would be trying to conduct a rock-throwing fight from the bottom of a well. The man at the top of the well has gravity working for him.

And taken metaphorically: the powerful arrayed with force(s) have a distinct and determined advantage, creating not just a chasm between classes but the means to *do some distance*, ever widening the gaps, the distribution of (and access to) wealth, hence power.

Again, wealth disparity is *nothing new under the sun*, but here, in a financially driven economy, is a maverick's means *to make money from money* ⁷⁸² — bypassing an earlier economy, more equitable, egalitarian, for that of fiefdoms, the few against the many. ⁷⁸³

In an interview, “Parallels in the decline of Rome & America”, Charles Hugh Smith cites that the “financialization” of the nation's economy, giving unlimited access to cheap capital and leverage as “the foundation of wealth”, counters the traditions of work while enabling criminal conduct on a scale that is *too big to jail*.

⁷⁸¹ From Wikipedia, **Robert Anson Heinlein** was an American science fiction author, aeronautical engineer, and naval officer. Sometimes called the “dean of science fiction writers”, he was among the first to emphasize scientific accuracy in his fiction and was thus a pioneer of the subgenre of hard science fiction.

⁷⁸² **Making money from money** to mean gains or income from speculation rather than investment, capitalization.

⁷⁸³ Not considering at all the entire economic history, referring to the post-WW2 era of *upward mobility*, affordability, access to savings growth and other opportunities characteristic of the “best generation”.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“**In another galaxy**,” or *another world*, goes the way of aberrant behavior, perceived or proven, from what we think and speak to what we do or claim to do. Given that no one fully *lives-up to* their claims, given hype and hypocrisy, we each visit (or travel to) *another galaxy* from time to time—some more than others.

Most nights you'll find me swinging in the hammock of the moon, sipping the night black, a few stars as sugar cubes.⁷⁸⁴

And yet *another galaxy* does not sound all that bad, maybe better, given conditions and, to believe *End Times* prophesy, the destruction of the present in preparation for the restoration of the perfect.... Yes, *another world*, *another galaxy*, might be *the best of times* given the present and that *on the horizon*.

A half century ago, the sone “New World Coming” rang-out from the voice of Mama Cass⁷⁸⁵. From the lyrics,

There's a new world comin'. and it's just around the bend.

There's a new world comin', this one's comin' to an end.

There's a new voice callin', you can hear it if you try.

And it's growin' stronger with each day that passes by.

Reflecting the winsomeness also viewed as aberrant, (when so much of the present, perceived or proven, from what we think and what we hear—or think we see—gives pause to wonder what a better world would be, while,

At this very moment enormous numbers of intelligent men and women of goodwill are trying to build a better world. But problems are born faster than they can be solved.⁷⁸⁶

⁷⁸⁴ Curtis Tyrone Jones.

⁷⁸⁵ From Wikipedia, Cass Elliot “**Mama Cass**” was a member of the Mamas and the Papas.

⁷⁸⁶ B.F. Skinner, *Walden Two*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Whistling dixie,” with reference to the Confederation of states seceding in the vain hope of winning their independence, is the notion that something impossible is possible, possibly more than *barking up the wrong tree* or *missing the mark* altogether.

It was a war of economics—as often if not always the case, the cause, for war—whereby the aristocracy of the South were forced to *play the game* of excessive tariffs and other impositions on commerce too far from the concept of state’s rights in the Jeffersonian mind, and too much in the direction of centralized powers reminiscent of colonialism, empires, and such.

Left to the vices of powers, the South undoubtably outmatched, yet driven to conflict from Fort Sumter where a federal fleet was in route⁷⁸⁷, the pressing need to defend this principal port, this key city, for obvious reason. As it was, the South was under the vexing clash of powers, both the agrarian and the industrialize, the later to *absorb* the South in part to finance its growth westward.⁷⁸⁸

What the Federal government was doing (did)—as the state is inclined—is (was) much as The Crown; seizing property and possession with varying degrees of force, *the spoils of war* to propel yet more of the same, each step that much closer to empire and immense wealth for a relative few at the expense of many.

Whistling dixie was certainly the case, the likely defeat for the Confederation, but more, for the balance of powers essential to a Republic, the checks, and balances of POWER.

⁷⁸⁷ A fleet of war ships were in route to Charleston, a provocation of/for war, for which mainland batteries operated by a fledging Southern military prepared—all this in addition to attempts by the provisional confederacy to purchase Fort Sumter from the Federal government, obviously without success though ostensibly to avert conflict.

⁷⁸⁸ The motives of the Federal government were clear, predictable, as the state craves power as both a means and end.

“Picking in high cotton,” as another of the same era and region as *whistling dixie*, is to anticipate success, perhaps wealth. And while “cotton is king”, in truth it was just a crop though a mainstay for the South over several decades, maybe longer.

As to real kings, those that preside over kingdoms, the honors went (or go) to those earthly figures that, above election, are crowned as christened, seemingly superior, *the cream of the crop*. Beyond earth however are those considered as sovereign, powerful beyond..., profound, perfect, peacemakers. Yes, Yeshua,⁷⁸⁹ *the name above all names*, that given to Christ, and as to the relationship with earthly kings, there is (and has been) a deep divide, a separation of one world from the other and a rejection of Jesus, the Messiah, the savior, the anointed one, the sone of God and of man. And thus,

The kings of the earth rise-up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying,

“Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles.”⁷⁹⁰

To mean to plot, to plan or conspire—chiefly against Christ—on Earth, and against the followers as before, always. Yes, they conspire against Yeshua and in turn, Yahweh, though

The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.

The One rebukes them...and terrifies them with wrath, and still more, has installed *the king* that is, by example, the servant and then finally the savior of his people, profound, perfect, peacemaker.⁷⁹¹

⁷⁸⁹ From Wikipedia, In English, the name **Yeshua** is extensively used by followers of Messianic Judaism, Christ, whose father is Yahweh.

⁷⁹⁰ Psalm 2: 1-2.

⁷⁹¹ Psalm 2: 3, 4-7 with commentary.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Once in a blue...,” to be followed with “moon”, to mean some occurrence or event that is extremely rare, unexpected, sometimes applied to one’s behavior, choices, decisions, and such.

I suppose we all do some things *once in blue* moon, and as considered bad choice intended or not, is tolerated on some level by others—or even accepted within the graces or exceptions of trust, goodwill or simply getting along. Sure, we’re selfish, prone to think and act in our best interest, often overlooking any adverse effects, risks and issues that ensue, result. One can *act-out* when they don’t get their way or worse, *push comes to shove*, denies responsibility—even wrongfully blaming others—regardless of the circumstances, their conduct, copiability.

He simply does not possess the emotional capacity to comprehend how his actions affect others.⁷⁹²

And hence *the child* or “child-like”.

Lacking empathy—or the capacity to love—such persons may be delayed in development, seemingly stuck in a state of perpetual prepubescence; yet *of legal age*, able to flex forces unfettered by conscience, and undaunted by all but those that choose to depart.

...They’ll manipulate and they’ll lie to you. And when you no longer give them that power, they’ll try to manipulate your family.... Their lack of morals and integrity is sick. The amount of hate they harbor in their hearts is sick....⁷⁹³

And they are comparable to a tyrant, though the sphere of POWER is notably smaller, in that they insist on being right amid many wrongs in the wake of waywardness, even wickedness.

⁷⁹² Mary Jo Buttafuoco, *Getting It Through My Thick Skull: Why I Stayed, What I Learned, and What Millions of People Involved with Sociopaths Need to Know*.

⁷⁹³ LaTasha “Tacha B.” Braxton.

“Out of the blue,” takes from the previous *once in blue moon*; an occurrence or event arriving without warning, unexpectedly, the reaction ranging from delight to dread, from surprise to shock.

As these words are written, a series of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions are posing imminent danger to the island of La Palma and potential danger to surrounding islands, distant shorelines.

This marks the first volcanic eruption on the island since 1971. The volcano had been quiet until 2017 when earthquake swarms started to appear from time to time, sign of magma slowly accumulating in its deeper reservoirs. The last before the recent crisis was in December last year.⁷⁹⁴

What becomes of this next in series is predicted to be months of activity given the history of such, but still there is (or could be) the unpredictable, the uncertain, that includes the formation of a tsunami with affected zones in any direction and extending more than a thousand miles in length, breadth.

In this modern day of early warning, there seems hardly any of natural occurrences—or manmade for that matter—that merely comes *out of the blue*; indeed, major storms are preceded by days if not weeks of media, early warning and even some prediction on strength and trajectory. And there are good reasons to report on such possibilities or certainties, of course. But then those..., as in or with 9/11, where information is concealed, the details omitted or distorted for reasons unknown or undisclosed, all along manufacturing a new enemy—expanding all means and methods for stopping terrorism by using terrorism as was *the war to end wars* decades ago.⁷⁹⁵

⁷⁹⁴ Volcano Discovery, “La Palma, Canary Islands: seismic crisis Sep 2021 – updates,”

⁷⁹⁵ Using terror to end terror is as absurd as lodging war to end war.

Pondering on points of POWER

“On the brink of,” means that, unlike *out of the blue*, something is soon to happen soon, often bad as a disaster. *On the brink of*, as idioms apply, is one that seems very timely to the day; that with each passing week, one wonders what is next..., the developments of a pandemic or some other crisis, impending, perhaps planned.

In a much larger context is, among other things, a feeling that the world is changing at an accelerated rate (much as/with technology over the last half century or more) ushering much of the world into a reset, a new order ⁷⁹⁶, designed to internationalize increasing controls, leveraging every previous means of tyranny on a scale as never known or recorded. ⁷⁹⁷ To see its end is the understand that

Any system of world order, to be sustainable, must be accepted as just—not only by leaders, but also by citizens. It must reflect two truths: order without freedom, even if sustained by momentary exaltation, eventually creates its own counterpoise; yet freedom cannot be secured or sustained without a framework of order to keep the peace. ⁷⁹⁸

And thus, much the creation of compelling reasons for citizens of each nation to accept—and even desire—a world government. What kind of “reasons”? Why, those representatives of global crisis, that reduce confidence in current government(s), thus push populations *beyond the brink* of despair and dependence—not just poised for such change but more or less begging for it as the only hope for safety, security, or some cause ill-conceived and ill-fated order.

⁷⁹⁶ The “Great Reset” is already news, but the “New World Order” is a concept that has been around for decades, notably addressed by George H. Bush as a replacement for what he called “jungle law”.

⁷⁹⁷ The more concentrated a government, the more certain tyranny given few if any check and balances of power., unbridled and unfettered forces.

⁷⁹⁸ Henry Kissinger, *World Order*.

But “**Something stinks**,” in the idea of world order. The more centralized the government, the more likely corruption and then, internal strife with the certainty of implosion, the systems’ suicide; eventually, has history is consistent, the concentration of POWER(s) blocks all prospect of truth and thus invariably leads to lies followed by denial, betrayal, and mass murder endemic of such evil pursuits.

If/as the truth does not matter, then neither do lies, denial and betrayal. And if/as murder does not matter than neither does life, living; indeed, this is the way forward, a way to “win” where the only truth that matters is what you are forced to believe, and the only life that matters is of/for those (things) that you are forced to deem worthy—as determined by *the order* and its ilk.

But truth must matter and in fact, it always has and always will, no matter those who fail to honor truth, that twist truth into their interests and ambitions, intoxicated by POWER, driven by destiny.

And murder matters too, the unjust taking of life born or unborn, as it always has and always will, no matter the merciless that, shorn of the capacity for empathy and seared in the capability for conscience, propagate deception, destruction, and doom.

The unprecedented, unparalleled concentration of power will invariably necessitate force(s) as never before; that as described in the Scriptures, *the beginning of sorrows and birth pains*.⁷⁹⁹ And

If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.⁸⁰⁰

While truth will prevail, both the way and the light.

⁷⁹⁹ Matthew 24.

⁸⁰⁰ Matthew 24:22.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Crossed wires**,” confusion, failing to communicate clearly, accurately, whatever the reason if reason at all. Sometimes *crossed wires* can be sourced while other times not, the reason(s) apparently unnecessary, unattainable, unavailable, or unfavorable.

Communication is POWER and, given a method and means to control..., is *soft force*.⁸⁰¹ Misinformation and disinformation, implicitly or intentional misleading, is subtle but stellar for muddling the matter, manipulating, maneuvering.... Unambiguously but ambitiously, arduously,

The truth is the passion of a small and aberrant minority of men, most of them pathological. They are hated for telling it while they live, and after they die, they are swiftly forgotten. What remains to the world, in the field of wisdom, is a series of tested, solidly agreeable lies.⁸⁰²

Contradicting and countervailing *the truth, the passion*, is calculation *baked into the cake*, or by any other description, planned fundamentally to reign and rule, by:

- Controlling conscious (mind-control)
- Contradicting conscience, morals, and ethics
- Criminalizing courage, individual will, personal principles
- Culling doubts, disagreements, and dissent, or any, similar constraints
- Creating fear(s), producing phobias (mental illness)
- Concentrating and centralizing POWERS, *tour de force*.

⁸⁰¹ From Wikipedia, **soft force** involves shaping the preferences of others through appeal and attraction.

⁸⁰² H. L. Mencken.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“**Passing ships...**,” or meeting once, maybe twice, possibly by chance, but not seeing each other again.

Ships that pass in the night, and speak [to] each other in passing,
Only a signal shown and a distant voice in the darkness,
...on the ocean of life, we pass and speak [to] one another,
Only a look and a voice, then darkness again and a silence.⁸⁰³

But if not loneliness, landside, or seaside, what then of desire, even as *the darkness* comes, after or before *the light*?

Already addressing *the hook-up generation*⁸⁰⁴, *a boatload of ships* that pass (and are passing) in the night, board, and then depart without as much as *the horn*, a murmur, or another moment. Yes, in with *a bang* and out with *a whimper*—if any emotions or feelings—are two ships tonight, likely followed by more—perhaps *a fleet* on the prospect that someday one’s *ship will come in* and two might find it simpler just to hang together, make a home and all that stuff.⁸⁰⁵

As it is, both marriage and family are in serious decline, the connection as often income, debt, and opportunity.⁸⁰⁶ Where marriage and family go, so goes a society.

⁸⁰³ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *Tales of a Wayside Inn*.

⁸⁰⁴ From Wikipedia, **hookup culture** is one that accepts and encourages casual sex encounters, including one-night stands and other related activity, without necessarily including emotional intimacy, bonding, or a committed relationship.

⁸⁰⁵ Despite a decade-long expansion and record-low unemployment, studies suggest that between 60% and 70% of 18- to 34-year-olds rely on their parents for financial assistance. Market Watch, Oct. 12, 2019.

⁸⁰⁶ Pew Research Center, “The Decline of Marriage and Rise of New Families”, Nov. 18, 2010.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Not the sharpest,” along with “knife in the drawer,” to suggest that one *may not be smarter than the average bear* ⁸⁰⁷.

Knife sometimes suggest something dangerous, deadly, unlike the use above: one’s intellect or just thinking, expressed as, “You’re not real sharp,” or as once used, “dull,” as more than just unexciting.

How *sharp* or *bright* are you, or am I? How did we perform academically or professionally? Did you excel..., above average or to some extreme, *blow it out of the water* or, the end, *scrap by*? For the *not so sharp*..., can they somehow *break free, move on* (for even a *blunt knife can cut*, the scaring much more too.

There is intelligence and there is ignorance; the first, as the ability to acquire and apply knowledge and skills; and the second as opposite, the lack of knowledge or information. Given that knowledge-information, and one’s ability to acquire and then apply it, is POWER (or powerful), then ignorance is powerlessness. Thus, to disempower another is to withhold knowledge-information or to keep them *in the dark*, intentionally omitting-distorting details that otherwise enable power and with that, some opportunity, an advantage ⁸⁰⁸.

Individuals and institutions withhold...from others to hold or gain some advantage, using knowledge as leverage, a force. Some might hold that withholding...is not lying but is something less (serious, severe). Others might say that it is indeed lying by omission, ⁸⁰⁹ in view of the intentions, purpose, or a plan. Once trust is broken in/through such behaviors, it is no longer opinion.

⁸⁰⁷ This saying from the cartoon series, *Yogi Bear*.

⁸⁰⁸ An example is to outlaw literacy, access to knowledge.

⁸⁰⁹ **Lying by omission** is when a person leaves out important information or fails to correct a pre-existing misconception in order to hide the truth from others.

“...**In the drawer**,” as to continue from the previous page, *not the sharpest knife in the drawer*, and more, on the behavior of purposely withholding knowledge-information to gain an advantage over others. Yes, such behavior over a broad range of possibilities from slavery to seduction, from malevolence to matrimony.

This matter is *a tough one* given the reality that *all's fair in love and war*⁸¹⁰ or that one is not held to “reasonable behavior” in either. Still, withholding (of knowledge-information) is a matter of to be addressed if just to accept that indeed it is an “acceptable” behavior.

Among institutions, and specifically the state, is the concept of a “noble lie”⁸¹¹ justified to maintain order; avert/avoid hysteria, panic, and widespread fear seemingly for the good of society. But in fact, the state’s intentions are not always so *noble* but rather are nefarious, withholding or lying as a force for their good only, exclusively for a few at the expense of the many.

The Noble Lie—the idea that men are brothers and are created equal.⁸¹²

And given the source(s) or POWER behind the *noble lie*, what possibility remains to be *called out*, held accountable or otherwise made responsibly for this...among other egregious acts of deception? Given that the possibility is small, what is the possibility that such behavior, *noble* or not, is their norm made so by might, not right?

⁸¹⁰ The proverbial saying 'All's fair in love and war' expresses the idea that, like war, where any strategy is accepted, affairs of the heart are also no-holds-barred contests.

⁸¹¹ A **noble lie** is a myth or untruth, often, but not invariably, of a religious nature, knowingly propagated by an elite to maintain social harmony or to advance an agenda. The noble lie is a concept originated by Plato as described in the Republic.

⁸¹² Pierce Brown, *Red Rising*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**No news is good...**,” followed with “...news,” assumes all is well unless otherwise told or informed. And in keeping with this idiom, is one dated to WW, “All quiet on the Western Front,” ⁸¹³ and from a book with the same title.

A word of command has made these silent figures our enemies; a word of command might transform them into our friends. At some table a document is signed by some persons whom none of us knows, and then for years together that very crime on which formerly the world's condemnation and severest penalty fell, becomes our highest aim.

As such figures, silent or not, are necessary to rally the troops, to build consensus and support, to distinguish the “bad guy”, and finally to foment fear as a driving force. It is not enough to seek war or carry out aggression; no, there must be a cause, a reason, that parlays right with might, the *draws the line* of good and bad. ⁸¹⁴

Is truth relevant to righteousness or, if not, can falsehoods or fraud suffice, serving to create the illusion of righteousness? Again, information is POWER; and given enough power, any unvetted information, even information that is blatantly false, fraudulent, ⁸¹⁵ is {made} powerful, posed to snuff-out or supersede all else. Still,

Things come apart so easily when they have been held together with lies. ⁸¹⁶

But where lies fail to *hold*, falter, there remains other forces to blend eyes, bound hearts, and bag minds with falsehoods and fears.

⁸¹³ *All Quiet on the Western Front*, by Erich Maria Remarque, 1987.

⁸¹⁴ *Might makes right* is not enough; no, the whole of it is best when underwritten by righteousness, manufactured on not.

⁸¹⁵ **Information power** is a form of personal or collective power that is based on controlling information needed by others to reach an important goal.

⁸¹⁶ Dorothy Allison, *Bastard Out of Carolina*.

“...**News**,” as a repeat from the previous page, whether taken with the idiom or alone (as one word suggesting information that is “newsworthy”, informative, supportive perhaps in decision making whether a *one-off* or in one’s thinking, ideas, and beliefs).

Could it be that *news* is something somebody doesn’t want printed, all else as advertising? ⁸¹⁷

Cram them full of non-combustible data, chock them so damned full of ‘facts’ they feel stuffed, but absolutely ‘brilliant’ with information. Then they’ll feel they’re thinking, they’ll get a sense of motion without moving. And they’ll be happy because facts of that sort don’t change. Don’t give them any slippery stuff like philosophy or sociology to tie things up with. ⁸¹⁸

As another possibility, the illusion of insight, understanding and knowledge—POWER—and/or the “happy news”; the rescued dog, the extended holiday hours, or *the gold at the end of the rainbow*. But as it is,

We have currently a built-in allergy to unpleasant or disturbing information.... But unless we get up off our fat surpluses and recognize that television in the main is being used to distract, delude, amuse, and insulate us, then television and those who finance it, those who look at it, and those who work at it, may see a totally different picture too late. ⁸¹⁹

Which means that such sources are intentionally uninformative, and

...to decide what to cover is to become *the shaper* of the news rather than a mirror held up to the news. It makes journalists actors rather than observers. It annihilates our fundamental conception of ourselves. ⁸²⁰

⁸¹⁷ William Randolph Hearst.

⁸¹⁸ Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*.

⁸¹⁹ Edward R. Murrow.

⁸²⁰ Ezra Klein, *Why We’re Polarized*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Zero sum game,” is a situation in which one person's gain is equivalent to another's loss, so the net change in benefit is zero.

A classic example of a Non-Zero-Sum Game situation is called the Prisoner's Dilemma, where two prisoners are interrogated separately, and are offered a bargain where if one confesses, he is set free, while the other prisoner is convicted for 10 years. If both confess, they both face 2 years in prison. If both keep their mouth shut, they would both serve 6 months for a minor crime.⁸²¹

This process of adjudication, *the plea bargain*, is a *bone of contention* simply because it violates the 5th Amendment, as previously detailed, while circumventing *due process*—though it remains primary, setting one defendant against another as standard practice despite the injustices, the violations of due process, the 5th. But,

As criminal courts become ever more crowded, prosecutors and judges alike feel increased pressure to move cases quickly through the system. Criminal trials can take days, weeks, or sometimes months, while guilty pleas can often be arranged in minutes. Also, the outcome of any given trial is usually unpredictable, whereas a plea bargain provides both prosecution and defense with some control over the result—hopefully, one that both can live with.⁸²²

Hence, *the plea bargain*: an expedient method that essentially ensures guilt regardless of the evidence, violates *due process*, and effectively determines guilt at the time of the charge(s). Indeed, *the plea bargain* is much more or less than a *zero-sum game*,

⁸²¹ **A Non-Zero-Sum Game** is a situation where one's win does not necessarily mean another's loss, and one's loss does not necessarily mean that the other party wins. In a Non-Zero-Sum Game, all parties could gain, or all parties could lose, www.alleydog.com.

⁸²² “The Basics of a Plea Bargain”, www.nolo.com.

“Name of the game,” is the title of both a TV series and a song, but in meaning, is another way of identifying the basic goal or purpose of an activity. From the refrain of the song by Abba,

What's the name of the game?
Does it mean anything to you?
What's the name of the game?
Can you feel it the way I do?
Tell me please, 'cause I have to know
I'm a bashful child, beginning to grow ⁸²³

And as to the song, its message: a girl captivated by an apparent love interest that she's *only seen twice, in a short time*; and she, with an inferior sense of herself and thus, taking in this presumed interest without reservation, insisting to know if he has similar feelings.

There is that risk; caring about another, perhaps falling in love, and even marrying, only to see them leave, the other to *walk away* and, if not mad, possibly glad adding insult to injury.

The beauty of caring is in part the discovery of who we are and are not, what *makes us tick*, our strengths, and our weaknesses. And,

Man is an individual, but he is not self-sufficing. The law of his nature is love, a harmonious of life to life in obedience to the divine center and source of his life. [But]

This law is violated when man seeks to make himself the center and source of his own life. ⁸²⁴

That as he grows, really grows, he puts away *the things of childhood* and notions of being *at the center*, caring and serving others.

⁸²³ Songwriters: Benny Goran Bror Andersson / Bjoern K Ulvaeus / Stig Erik Leopold Anderson. The Name of the Game lyrics © Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC, Universal Music Publishing Group, BMG Rights Management

⁸²⁴ Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*.

Pondering on points of POWER

"Lost in the shuffle," unkept, ignored, *the sleight of hand*, whatever it is was/is.

...life may be just a shaky expectation, [given] everyone realizes that the cards have often been shuffled, well in advance.⁸²⁵

To suggest that one's destiny is practically predetermined—whether they like it or not.

There the that ongoing debate, differing views, about our life (lives); on the one side is that one is self-made, their future *within their grasp*, while the other is that much is already determined, *the path* marked-out for them. Given,

The essence of man is his freedom,⁸²⁶

It seems we each are *wired* to choose, to plot our own course and then navigate toward/through it. But in fact, we struggle in some way(s), *plotting to plot* but and *navigating to navigate* while the forces of nature and spirit work, seemingly with or against us. *Man is born into trouble as surely as the sparks fly upward.*⁸²⁷

He stands at the juncture of nature and spirit. The freedom of his spirit cause him to break the harmonies of nature and the pride of his spirit prevents him from starting a new harmony; but his failure to observe the limits of his finite existence causes him to defy the forms and restraints of both nature and reason.

And in this, the human self-consciousness that

Vainly imagines that it is [The World] and not a narrow tower insecurely erected amidst the shifting sands of the world.

Though ideally, one comes the realize that he is created for freedom to care and to serve, and to find security beyond this world.

⁸²⁵ Erik Pevernagie.

⁸²⁶ Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*.

⁸²⁷ Job 5:7.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“**Beat around the...**” ends with “bush”, and means to avoid giving a definitive answer, taking a certain position.

If you don’t know the answer to a question, do not beat around the bush. There is absolutely nothing wrong with saying

“I don’t know” ⁸²⁸

But there are reasons, more excuses, for *beating around the bush*; the hem and haw to evade a question: voicing vaguer, retorting, shifting the subject, or *firing back* with accusations, assertions, insults, and all to muster..., to skirt the question, to *turn the table*. And of course, some can truly *beat around the bush*, dismissive of accountability, while they and their masters plot and navigate....

There exists the possibility of a ploy by those seeking to establish control. A cure, a remedy, will be proposed as the solution to a great sickness that will ail humanity. The sickness will be contrived, in my estimation, by conspiring governments of many nations, and may exit as an exaggeration of the facts, or it may not exist at all. The remedy then, will be a source of both hope and a solution for the people and control of the people by the governments, and well as sufficiently weakening those who agree to ingest this terrible substance out of fear. ⁸²⁹

Which, putting the quote above with the *beat around the bush* rather than disclosures. is that once again, conspiracy is not theory; such ploys are pandemic, carried out by POWERS whose interest is chiefly their own, with expedience, *their ends justifying the means*.

Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned you rulers of the earth...for his wrath can flare up in a moment. ⁸³⁰

And every knee should bow, every tongue confesses.... ⁸³¹

⁸²⁸ Charmaine J. Forde.

⁸²⁹ Carl Jung, 1959.

⁸³⁰ Psalm 2: 10, 12, abbreviated.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Every Tom...**,” followed with “...Dick and Harry,” or everyone, anyone, inferring they’re one and all, *nobodies*, powerless perhaps.

As this page begins, *every Tom, Dick, and Harry* appears to be keenly interested in “the passports”; or essentially, the potential means to work, to shop and do many of the tasks necessary to survive in *the modern world*.⁸³² One may wonder and possibly worry that, “If you don’t get the jab, you don’t have a job (anymore).”

For the record, *the unvaccinated* are portrayed as a danger, a threat, and even the cause for continued cases among variants.⁸³³ And the possibilities are there; that *the unvaccinated* are at greater risk, more likely to propagate cases among variants. What is not a fact, possibly *lost in the shuffle* (or, if found, one to *beat around the bush*) is the apparent behavior of viruses to morph among variants and the realization that *the fully vaccinated* are not immune either; hence, that the “fully-vaccinated” are still vulnerable, susceptible. To recall, these drugs, the makers, and takers, are:

- Produced (for general use) in a fraction of the development timeframe for such drugs...and remains an experimental drug.
- Granted legal immunity for the producers, and thus *the vaccinated* accept/absorb all risks.
- Gifted incentives, from state to state, for participants.⁸³⁴

⁸³¹ Philippians 2:10, abbreviated.

⁸³² First, at it appears, the perception that many are keenly interested...in the vaccine passports due to the implied limitations, the penalties imposed on the public.

⁸³³ This portrayal is possibly created by the media, stigmatizing groups while avoiding the question of the vaccines’ efficacy or other factors.

⁸³⁴ Gifts are generally petty, but some colleges give/gave cash incentives.

"...**Harry**," alone, usually means something difficult, some place that is dangerous, chaotic, confusing.

A recollection of *Harry* used in this way, is the film *Apocalypse Now*,⁸³⁵ a description of a village and beachfront under consideration. The commander of the squadron, Colonel Kilgore, loves surfing and is scoping out a beach for just that; and this..., besides an air attack to establish a beachhead and drop a boat crew for its continued mission upriver, the main feature of the film. And on arriving, landing, Kilgore gives the order, "You can either surf, or you can fight!"

Meanwhile, the main character and narrator of the story, Captain Benjamin Willard, watches and waits with morbid curiosity coupled with the expected caution given the situation, the theatrics of the of Colonel, bear-chested and erect amid explosions, fire, and fodder, undaunted in both the attack and the desire to surf, if just to watch. The situation, that beach, is *harry*, but the will of the Colonel, iconic of the warmonger, is overpowering, leading to comments by Willard to the tune that Kilgore knows he cannot die, is immortal. Still, and after a long diatribe as he parades among the dying and dead, the Colonel turns to the captain and murmurs, "Someday this war's gonna end," in a somber and sad tone.

But with every war is yet another somewhere, somehow and for somebody—least of which for those willing to fight and, as war goes, incurring one wound or another, the scars amid the ribbons, the stories spoken and those *carried to the grave*; and in this..., some justification(s) that ends truth before it warrants all else that compels us to obey the criminally insane.

⁸³⁵ From Wikipedia, *Apocalypse Now* is a 1979 American epic psychological] war film directed and produced by Francis Ford Coppola, and is considered today as one of the greatest films ever made.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Greater than sliced...,” to end with “bread”, as to mean *the greatest thing since sliced bread*. And *bread* is a great thing, and for many, the greatest....⁸³⁶

*If the love of money (bread) is the root of all evil*⁸³⁷, then there a boatload of evil about the earth, from the depths of greed and graft to the heights of extravagance, lavishness, and largess—the likes of which is unprecedented in all of history. Yes, money apparently *makes the world go round*; that is, until it is debased⁸³⁸ into oblivion and *the world stops, “deceiving or being deceived”*⁸³⁹.

...the abundance of paper has produced a spirit of gambling in the funds, which has laid up our ships at the wharves as too slow instruments of profit and has even disarmed the hand of the tailor of his needle and thimble. They say the evil will cure itself. I wish it may; but I have rarely seen a gamester cured, even by the disasters of his vocation.

And the *gamesters* (or speculators) growing as never before, given the financial economy of the day, is leading to the inevitable.

Everything predicted by the enemies of banks, in the beginning, is now coming to pass. We are to be ruined now by the deluge of bank paper...with their swindling profits, profits which are the price of no useful industry of theirs.

Finally, but not final, public debt, the liquidation of anything of value among and within public interest, *the commons*.

...the principle of spending money to be paid by posterity, under the name of funding, is but swindling futurity on a large scale.⁸⁴⁰

⁸³⁶ Referring to money.

⁸³⁷ 1 Timothy 6:10.

⁸³⁸ **Debased** or reduced in real value either by fiat and/or through indefinite borrowing, printing or circulation, inflation.

⁸³⁹ 2 Timothy 3:13.

⁸⁴⁰ Thomas Jefferson.

“**Bread and butter**,” to mean one’s livelihood, their main source of income, generally earned by routine work.

Coinciding with the emergence of the finance economy was the deindustrialization ⁸⁴¹ of the country, the offshoring of manufacturing spawned from the industrial age and propelled post-WW2 until the 1970s.

During the 1970s alone, between 32 and 38 million jobs were lost due this kind of disinvestment.... Manufacturing, which after WW2 accounted for nearly 30% of the economy, by 2011 had dropped to just over 10%, Since 2000 alone, 35 million jobs have vanished, and 42,000 plants have closed (or about 17 per day).

Not withstanding the yields of the rising finance industry ⁸⁴², as alluded to by Jefferson in the previous page (“...no useful industry of theirs.”) is both disinvestment (the reduction in capital investment) during operation and liquidation of manufacturing assets (both labor and equipment) during the plant closings. In short, the fleecing of factories from the business landscape was a windfall for big business while a tragedy for the working class, economically and social.

...the ascendancy of high finance was premised on gutting the industrial heartland. That is to say, the FIRE ⁸⁴³ sector not only supplanted industry but grew at its expense—and at the expense of high wages, and the capital [once flowing into industry]. ⁸⁴⁴

⁸⁴¹ From Wikipedia, **deindustrialization** is a process of social and economic change which is caused by the removal or the reduction of industrial capacity or industrial activity in a country or a region, especially by the removal or the reduction of a heavy industry or a manufacturing industry.

⁸⁴² From the same source, a quote from a hedge fund manager, “The money made from manufacturing is a pittance in comparison to the amount of money made from shuffling money around.”

⁸⁴³ Finance, Insurance, Real Estate (**FIRE**).

⁸⁴⁴ Steven Fraser, *The Age of Acquiescence*, 2015.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Jammed up...**,” is, to no surprise, to be stuck, locked-up, locked-in, or from the bowels, constipated.

Being that *there is no place like home*, locked-out, forced-out, or put-out is that

When you are kept from your home, no matter where you are, you are in a cage.⁸⁴⁵

Unless *your home* is no longer (or not) yours...due to one or more circumstances whether a renter or a buyer, honest or a liar. Where, after all, is *your home*? Some say *your home is where you hang your hat*, but going back somewhat, one could *hang* (or could have hung) *their hat* any place at an (or on) entrance, as with their coat. As it is, less so *hanging one's hat*, so too is the growing development of fewer having a place to call *home*.⁸⁴⁶

For reasons beyond this writing, there is an increasing trend of unaffordability of housing. From Habitat for Humanity,⁸⁴⁷

When cost burden data for 2020 is available next year, it will likely show greater unaffordability still in the homeownership market. Despite the spike in unemployment in 2020, home prices were up 5.7% in September 2020 year over year according to the *S&P CoreLogic Case-Shiller Home Price Index*.

What is to become of this growing trend is dependent on making housing affordable, of course, but also attainable, accessible; and if one cannot afford a hat or hanger, is *home* even worth considering?

⁸⁴⁵ Shane Arbuthnott, *Terra Nova*.

⁸⁴⁶ Several reasons include: the ration of income to rent and/or property values; the increased risks for homeowners, the volatility of property values exasperated by mortgage-backed securities (MBS).

⁸⁴⁷ **Habitat for Humanity** is a “partnership housing,” organization, building houses at no profit, financed with no interest loans, funded through fundraising and volunteerism.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“...and jelly tight,” to complete the 1970s’ pop hit, “Jam Up Jelly Tight”,⁸⁴⁸ while *singing a far different tune* of or about the housing problems of *homeless*, locked-out, forced-out, or put-out.

If the housing problem(s), largely spurred by the changing ratio of income to property values, wasn’t bad enough, last year’s events of creating unemployment and more insecurities, and the moratorium on eviction notices, has added more *fuel to the fire*.

Renters experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19 have exhausted their resources and limited funds just as eviction moratoriums and emergency relief across the United States expire. Without intervention, the housing crisis will result in significant harm to renters and property owners.⁸⁴⁹

Both renters—many of which lost income, employment—and agencies, unable to collect, are affected. Meanwhile, investment firms are adding to Wall Street’s stake in residential real estate,⁸⁵⁰

Although the number of houses being purchased by mega-investors is currently not enough to move the market in most parts of the country, these firms’ underlying structural advantage is profound and growing...Atlanta (22%), Charlotte (22%), and Phoenix (20%).

⁸⁴⁸ From Wikipedia, “Jam Up and Jelly Tight” is a song written by Tommy Roe and Freddy Weller that number 8 on the Billboard Hot 100 in 1970.

⁸⁴⁹ “The COVID-19 Eviction Crisis: an Estimated 30-40 Million People in America Are at Risk,” August 7, 2020,

<https://www.aspeninstitute.org/blog-posts/the-covid-19-eviction-crisis-an-estimated-30-40-million-people-in-america-are-at-risk/>

⁸⁵⁰ Harkening back to the *housing bubble*. “Investment Firms Aren’t Buying All the Houses. But They Are Buying the Most Important Ones,” <https://slate.com/business/2021/06/blackrock-invitation-houses-investment-firms-real-estate.html>

Pondering on points of POWER

“Throwing good...,” is followed by “money,” as to waste it, spending it on something that inevitably will fail. There is apparently a caveat; the “fallacy” that this idiom does not always track or follow, especially given a positive change, something new, nascent, a *better idea, approach, or way*.

From personal experience, and in retrospect, *good money was thrown after bad...*, though the limits of money do limit this possibility, the degree or depth of the ill-spent, maleficence and such. When or if the monies or credit are practically unlimited, what are the endless possibilities of *throwing good money after bad*?

It is a popular delusion that the government wastes vast amounts of money through inefficiency and sloth. Enormous effort and elaborate planning are required to waste this much money.⁸⁵¹

As Big Business, banking, and government work cooperatively to bankrupt the country, carving-up/out natural or real assets, lending to inevitable collapse, taking most...with it. ⁸⁵²

Cultures that do not recognize that human life and the natural world have a sacred dimension, an intrinsic value beyond monetary value, cannibalize themselves until they die. ⁸⁵³

That again, as history predicts, *throwing good money after bad*, until the make-believe money vanishes, *the game over*, and the *chips fall* on most, unexpected of calamity, the consequence of crushing debt.

⁸⁵¹ P.J. O'Rourke, *Parliament of Whores: A Lone Humorist Attempts to Explain the Entire U.S. Government*.

⁸⁵² Borrowing, to include the incessant issuance of money, cannot occur without collateral and indeed is the natural and real assets, both public and private.

⁸⁵³ Chris Hedges, *The World as It Is: Dispatches on the Myth of Human Progress*.

“...**After bad**,” as to close-out this idiom from the previous page, is to not only question the consequence(s) but also the concept of “bad”; after all, what is *bad* for one is not necessarily *bad* for another, but indeed, some *good* comes from *bad*. There is inadvertent *bad* but then intentional also, as when

I sit on a man's back choking him and making him carry me, and yet assure myself and others that I am sorry for him and wish to lighten his load possible...except by getting off his back.⁸⁵⁴

And call it nothing less than exploitation, from below to above.

We know we cannot be kind to animals until we stop exploiting them—exploiting animals in the name of science, exploiting animals in the name of sport, exploiting animals in the name of fashion, and yes, exploiting animals in the name of food.⁸⁵⁵

POWERS and its force(s) are enabled to do *bad*, seemingly for their *good*, taking allowances and abusing authority in such excesses as to exceed all semblance of checks and balances, pushing both public and private life to the brink of disparity and destruction—all the while in self-denial. In this state of *the state* is a mass distortion—and inversion—of what is really *bad* and *good*, twisting one into the other amid the shifting sands of arbitrary law and authoritarian order, with all absolutes once vouchsafed by a higher sense of truth and justice, dismissed as merely myth, spurned by the seared hearts of pride and pomp though sanctimoniously beset as superior by their apparent but artificial spirit, grand but ingratiating, grotesque, and as revealed, naked of the flag torn and tattered, its faded strips and fallen stars, of a republic not kept but, against the will of our founding fathers, executed by exploitation to the ethos.

⁸⁵⁴ Leo Tolstoy, *What Then Must We Do?*

⁸⁵⁵ Cesar Chavez.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Days are numbered,” as to the finiteness of our physical lives, much is derived from the Scriptures, the temporal life and then eternity, as *man is like a breath and his days like a passing shadow* ⁸⁵⁶.

Empires..., and one more book takes the fore, *Dying Empire: US Imperialism and Global Resistance (Rethinking Globalizations)* authored by Francis Shor.

By the 1970s the global hegemony established by an American Empire in the post-World War II period faced increasing resistance abroad and contradictions at home.

...

Offering insights into the political and cultural convulsions of recent decades whilst raising profound and compelling questions, this book will be of interest to activists, students, and scholars of American political culture, US foreign policy, globalization, imperialism, international relations, and social movements.

And in the rise and fall, from *the landing* to the legend, empires consistently follow a common fate; an eventual collapse preceded by a gradual but predictable decline, time immemorial. ⁸⁵⁷ Forces and motives that cause this..., is more the subject, but as to *lessons from the past*, what is clear and consistent is that empires overreach, exploiting resources beyond recovery, enervating the essence of what made them economically, militarily, socially, culturally, politically, and spiritually.

⁸⁵⁶ Psalm 144:4.

⁸⁵⁷ From **History Today**: global history has taken a boost from the current conflicts, protests and riots against corporate globalization, and the threat of worldwide terrorism against the West. These events fit into a global pattern of the rise and fall of societies, that can be traced back to ancient times. True of all the ancient empires we know, the cycle of rise and decline appears to be accelerating.

problems, pains, and pleasures

"**Time is short,**" with more emphasis on *the watch* or clock rather than the calendar, time is ticking and the *days as numbered*, far less to count.

That imperial POWERS are arrogant enough to overlook the inevitable (of certain collapse), should not shock any who understand that their abuses constrain and convolute truth, creating the conditions for crisis; an implosion, *a vacuum* enveloped in *a vortex, a column beneath a cumulus cloud* ⁸⁵⁸ that cuts both ways around the clock, the cyclonic flurry and fury followed by a swath of destruction that takes and leaves much carnage along its path.

What is imperialism anyway? ⁸⁵⁹ In a study published in 1902, John A. Hobson quotes E. K. Hunt, author of *History of Economic Thought*:

When productive capacity grew faster than consumer demand, there was very soon an excess of this capacity (relative to consumer demand), and, hence, there were few profitable domestic investment outlets. Foreign investment was the only answer. But, insofar as the same problem existed in every industrialized capitalist country, such foreign investment was possible only if non-capitalist countries could be "civilized", "Christianized", and "uplifted"—that is, if their traditional institutions could be forcefully destroyed, and the people coercively brought under the domain of the "invisible hand" of market capitalism. So, imperialism was the only answer. ⁸⁶⁰

Yet, such conquest is not beyond time, it's domain indefinite.

⁸⁵⁸ A tornado.

⁸⁵⁹ From Wikipedia, **imperialism**, according to John A. Hobson, is a politico-economic discourse about the negative financial, economic, and moral aspects of imperialism as a nationalistic business enterprise. Hobson argues that capitalist business activity brought about imperialism.

⁸⁶⁰ E.K. Hunt, *History of Economic Thought*, 2nd ed. page 355.

Pondering on points of POWER

“At the end of my...,” is usually ended with “rope”, as a situation where no patience or energy is left to cope, deal with a problem.

In a *vacuum and vortex* illustrating imperialism is not only the devastating effect abroad, as “foreign investment”, but the consequences *at home*, as James Madison warned:

The means of defense against foreign danger, have been always the instruments of tyranny at home. Among the Romans it was a standing maxim to excite a war, whenever a revolt was apprehended. Throughout all Europe, the armies kept up under the pretext of defending, have enslaved the people.

And in some form, his words ring true today; that domestic liberty is lost is *the big sucking sound* ⁸⁶¹ of the *cyclonic fury* pouring over international lands and waters, creating markets among enslaved masses, so that a relative few can attain a king’s ransom and perhaps achieve immortality at least in their minds if not historical record.

And what is conquest without a defense against yet another “foreign danger”; that if such does not exist, an “enemy” or bad guy, at least one must be created, an existential, exaggerated threat—whatever it takes to ensure our position, our presence, as once more for freedom, liberty and all that stuff. But Madison again:

If tyranny and oppression come this land, it will be in the guise of fighting a foreign enemy.

And

No nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare.

And yet here we are, perhaps *at the end of our rope*.

⁸⁶¹ A phrase used by Ross Perot to describe Washington’s endless, incessant overspending, budget deficits and public debt.

“Rope-a-dope,” is, to those who follow boxing, a technique mastered by Muhammed Ali where the one, seemingly pinned at the ropes, goads the opponent to throw tiring, ineffective punches, setting a trap, a bait and swing.

Flashing to fiction and one more film, it was Admiral Ackbar in *Star Wars*, who is renowned for saying, “It’s a trap!”⁸⁶² And who wants to be trapped, lured, baited, fooled, swindled, cut-off, closed-in or shutdown, no way out as it seems? There is *the hunted* and *the hunter*, but then the trap to put a twist to it.

A hunter is always all eyes and ears towards his trap. He cannot orchestrate a drama and drop into oblivion.⁸⁶³

With “drama” as everything that happens leading up to the *point of no return*, comes the collection of *the prize*.

There is that oft referred to verse, *pride comes before the fall*,⁸⁶⁴ or a trap that is, in some measure, self-made or self-induced.

The praise of man brings with it three snares: pride, false security, and addiction. Taking the glory unto self and not acknowledging God, relying on what I can do and entrenching a false sense of self-worth and getting addicted to more praise.

But

The praise of God is real and everlasting.⁸⁶⁵

Is it possible that one can *self-rope-a-dope*, setting up their own fall, trapped by their own decision, determination, as *pride goes before destruction*, before *the fall*?⁸⁶⁶

⁸⁶² From one of the *Star Wars* trilogies.

⁸⁶³ Vincent Okay Nwachukwu, *Weighty 'n' Worthy African Proverbs* - Volume 1.

⁸⁶⁴ From Wiktionary, one who is excessively proud will often suffer a setback or failure.

⁸⁶⁵ Paddick van Zyl.

Pondering on points of POWER

“In the weeds,” apparently has two meanings: overwhelmed with work and unable to keep up with the necessary pace; or to wander into esoteric and unimportant details when one is researching a subject or writing a report. In my own association, the meaning might be said: “Too much detail (at this time)!”

To be *in the weeds* might just as well be *over thinking it*; that the matter, however complex, should not (or does not need) to go further, deeper (though this detail but may be better served later, a *different place*). What we think, and why we think as we do, are important, and sometimes *the weeds* matter, are a matter or *the* matter, while other times, not.

The mind is like the stomach. It is not how much you put into it that counts, but how much it digests.

And to understand the nature of *the state*—a subject and point of concern throughout this writing—is to realize that,

The positive testimony of history is that the State invariably had its origin in conquest and confiscation. No primitive State known to history originated in any other manner.

Despite the nature, whatever the name or title, *the state* is to be obeyed, respected, and even revered—but not worshiped—yet,

...there was an anomaly here. We were all supposed to respect our government and its laws, yet by all accounts those who were charged with the conduct of government and the making of its laws were most dreadful swine; indeed, the very conditions of their tenure precluded their being anything else.⁸⁶⁷

Where public life is profligate, *the pork chopped* for their POWERS., and the scraps—if any—left for those none the wiser.

⁸⁶⁶ Proverbs 16:18.

⁸⁶⁷ Albert J. Nock.

“Six ways to Sunday,” or by any means possible, but thoroughly, completely, and from a book of similar title,⁸⁶⁸

A warrior always, you lift a hand to create or destroy as you will, and heed no one's call but your own. And all the while, my one breathless thought, repeating as though I know nothing else...Take me with you.

To let me bask in the spoils of the war but, *heaven forbid*, that I should have to sacrifice, serve, or as expressed, *have some skin in the game* whatever my *dog in the fight*, mine to gain.

There is nothing punitive about “patriot”, but then the misuse of the word: to blindly accept/approve/allow *no good*, to *tag along* with *the state* (or its ilk, the apparatus)—accepting without exception that what they do is *good*, or more, acceptable No, *a patriot* is one who understands the nature of *the state* yet holds to *the better angels*⁸⁶⁹ (that POWER can be used *for good* despite *the bad*).

There is however the misuse..., and yet again, the exploitation of the word, its meaning, going so far as to single-out persons when/as they do not agree, or more, disagree with the conduct of *the state*, its interests, and actions under the rubric of defense, democracy or any other similar terms guised as *good*, often if not always for economic gains. And, if the state be a person,

He begins to want. He begins to crave. He wants to possess. His mind finally begins to process, to think and plan...He gives her his darkest, most serious look. He's telling her “Get ready, here we go.”

And she believes him (it), embracing the whole affair, the cause, conditions as a compelling reason for conquest, naked aggression.

⁸⁶⁸ *Six Ways from Sunday*, Donya Petrock.

⁸⁶⁹ From Wikipedia, *the better angels of our nature*, was used in Abraham Lincoln's first inaugural address.

Pondering on points of POWER

"Wrapped around the axle," or difficult situation (once again) from which to extract oneself, (like *at the end of the rope* or numerous other idioms describing a daunting challenge).

And on the last word, *challenge*, are the possibilities of working among thieves, layers of liars and thugs, deceived and being deceived, the possibility of *who done what* as *wrapped around the axle*, insolvable (as to an investigation), the culprits...criminals—given the POWER to conceal, cover-up, and *paper-over*....

So that makes us robbers of robbers," said Bug, "who pretend to be robbers working for a robber of other robbers. ⁸⁷⁰

Then, another word, riddling and puzzling.

Conundrum: A fun word to repeat...when no one's listening. Actual meaning is as puzzling as the need to chant the word ⁸⁷¹

Much as the word *shenanigans*, *conundrum* rolls-off the tongue with ease; a sound that overtakes the sobering meaning of secrets or dishonest activities, maneuvering—largely left unchecked, undetected, or kept close/low, *under the radar*—as the state has so professionally practiced with impunity. Meanwhile,

People, and not only Americans, are losing their sons, husbands, brothers, and fathers for no other reason than the profits of US armaments corporations, and the gullible American people seem proud of it. Those ribbon decals on their cars, SUVs and monster trucks proclaim their naive loyalty to the armaments industries and to the whores in Washington who promote wars.⁸⁷²

...either uninterested in or ignorant of the truth of the situation, conundrum, or a daunting challenge.

⁸⁷⁰ Scott Lynch, *The Lies of Locke Lamora*.

⁸⁷¹ Richelle E. Goodrich, *Smile Anyway: Quotes, Verse, and Grumblings for Every Day of the Year*.

⁸⁷² Paul Craig Roberts.

“Backseat driver,” is likely less used *today*, but refers to any car passenger attempting to control the driver with comments, unsolicited advice, or instructions. They are analogous to anyone who thinks they’re capable but cannot or will not go beyond words.

For much of the remaining writing, there will be concentration on *the state*—and to make it clear—coming from my effort to understand and comprehend without the qualifications of historian, scholar, or statesman, but only a concerned citizen if just to express it in words, here and elsewhere.

But words are not enough and even less, words that lack meaning, truth, or substance. It not enough to say something without acting beyond...and living such words, one’s life, in a meaningful and perhaps productive way.

Why concentrate on *the state*, so much on statism, is motivated by its depth and dearth, the notions of freedom and liberty *tossed around* while *the state* lies, cheats, and steals from *the commons* with prejudice—all the while portrayed as the public’s servant. But in truth, *the state* is presently a soft form of totalitarianism; an institution not specifically aimed to destroy the individual but rather to destroy all social or communal relationships—thereby maintaining a monolithic or singular position as the *be all* ⁸⁷³ of the citizenry. As the *soft* forms go..., so goes community ⁸⁷⁴, its end, witnessed in/as the decline of social strength commensurate with the rise/replacement of state POWERS with unlimited access to debt and hence, largesse to fuel allegiance, dependence, and control.

⁸⁷³ Such singular authority is unchecked giving rise to corruption in proportion, producing a kleptocracy, government of criminals.

⁸⁷⁴ By community to include all other means by which individuals form groups, attain power of some form; these include marriage, family, professional, spiritual and social organizations,

Pondering on points of POWER

“Get a grip,” as to get control (of yourself), recover or grasp the situation, the problem at hand. And “the problem” is, from the previous page and elsewhere in this writing, that democracy is dead—if it ever lived.

Indeed, the government is not a democracy ⁸⁷⁵ and, to look back in history, was never a decision or desire of *the framers* per the Republic given us. Flash forward to WWII—if not well before—and what is evident is a continuing, war-centered government complete with a vast *deep state* ⁸⁷⁶ of unelected, even private players, powerful and effective in extending and maintaining the states’ national and international overreach, control *across the board* of economic, political, and social dominance ⁸⁷⁷.

When *the framers* warned of “international entanglement”, they undoubtedly realized the potential to/for this newfound nation; to become as England and equally befall the consequences of all empires. And yet here we are, having taken the track with all its trappings to a newfound expansion and extension while—as further warned—forfeiting national freedoms. If not for the care and concern of the authentic Christian community, what would remain but ashes, dust, and another *notch on the post* of political plunder.

⁸⁷⁵ All elected officials are not determined by a majority (but by an electoral system) while much power and hence control resides within a relative few (a consortium of banks) with much public (and in fact private) possession in receivership; the collateral of untenable and unprecedented public debt due to the gross maleficence that has no end except default, the debasing of the dollar.

⁸⁷⁶ Refer to earlier descriptions of the *deep state*, but in general a vast network of public and private organizations operating and funded via *off-books* spending, the “black budget”.

⁸⁷⁷ Not to be confused with the military strategy, *full-spectrum dominance*, but multi-pronged/faceted, toward international hegemony.

“**Give a care**,” is less an idiom, but more an earnest request or response (seemingly not used much in the modern day, outdated, but referenced from a film about Martin Luther ⁸⁷⁸).

Used extensively in a previous book, the word “care” is considered as a synonym for love of fellow man. ⁸⁷⁹ And while there are supposedly many ways to love (another), *care* is generally an act or desire of kindness, compassion and all the constitutes the best in an individual despite diversions measured by/in *the heart*’s desire.

I think... if it is true that there are as many minds as there are heads, then there are as many kinds of love as there are hearts.⁸⁸⁰

As already described, *the heart*—while prone to deceit⁸⁸¹—is capable of generously and genuinely care, caring about others unconditionally, whereas *the state* among institutions is not.... Yes, individuals have the capacity to love, to *care*, and to do good—and accountability before God to do it! But *the state* has no such calling, but is both incapable..., and left unaccountable in its POWER is certain to carry out abuses without limits, demanding compliance, dictating obedience, for

...where the sole employer is the State, opposition means death by starvation...who does not obey shall not eat. ⁸⁸²

⁸⁷⁸ From Wikipedia, *Luther* is a 2003 American-German epic historical drama film loosely based on the life of Martin Luther starring Joseph Fiennes.

⁸⁷⁹ **Care:** the provision of what is necessary for the health, welfare, maintenance, and protection of someone or something, as a noun; or as a verb, to feel concern or interest, attach importance to something, or to look after and provide for the needs.

⁸⁸⁰ Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*.

⁸⁸¹ Jeremiah 17:9, the heart is deceitful above all things, beyond cure.

⁸⁸² Leon Trotsky.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Long and short...**,” followed by “of it,” as making a statement that is brief and that tells someone only the most important parts of something, the essence or rudimentary description.

To emphasize the *long and short* of my feelings regarding *the state* (not government⁸⁸³), is to suggest it due to a personal and painful experience, marital divorce with languishing and lasting, adverse effects. Given *the state's* motives are nothing less than an assault on marriage and family is reason enough, but further is the strong if not certain possibility that statism is growing and thus will *come to the door* of many unsuspecting and thus unprepared, unassuming of just how base and beastly this thing be, ⁸⁸⁴ and thus to

realize that this country has gone so *flabby* that any gang daring enough and unscrupulous enough, and smart enough not to seem illegal, can grab hold of the entire government and have all the power and applause and salutes, all the money and palaces and willing women they want. ⁸⁸⁵

Directly or deceptively, but nonetheless tyrannical, and possibly totalitarian, ⁸⁸⁶ *the state* is a sphere or spirit of authority and order whose only interest is its own POWER; yet still,

When authority [arrives] in the guise of organization, it develops charms fascinating enough to convert communities.... ⁸⁸⁷

⁸⁸³ Distinction is made here; government that is accountable and *the state* as largely unaccountable and thus prone to abuses.

⁸⁸⁴ Previous notes and a general understanding of societal trends gives pause to ponder the possibilities of statism here; that as societal strength wanes, state power rises (is growing) as invasive to an increasing mass many of which are (or will be) shocked to discover, confront, as with continuous war, the so-called “health of the state”.

⁸⁸⁵ Sinclair Lewis, *It Can't Happen Here*, 1935.

⁸⁸⁶ Drawing distinction of these two, **tyrannical** as cruel and oppressive behavior, and **totalitarian** as centralized and dictatorial and requires complete subservience.

“Panties in a wad,” is, sexist or not, another way of saying that someone is riled-up, irritated, annoyed, provoked, upset or all at the same time for some reason(s) given or not.

There is any number of causes that lend to *panties in a wad* but what is not always clear or even communicated is the why, the what for, or the how, that *stirs the pot* or *flames the fire*. Certain however is that fear is somewhere close by, whatever the cause(s), wherever the root or source.

The ideas or evidence of growing statism fosters fears, of course, rooted in both *statism*, strategy-tactics, and in/from any opposers or oppressed whether through personal experience and/or public experience. One can be fearful of associations to any *outliers* and outlaws, “persons of interest” that if not condemned with or without charges, will go to great length to avoid them(it)—even family, once friends and colleagues! And as one POTUS so aptly put it post-911, “Either you are with us, or you are the terrorist,”⁸⁸⁸ polarizing persons as either “patriot”—who get along—or terrorists, who don’t.... And in this divide are words once part of *free speech*, now beyond *politically correct*, contradictory, condemned, criminal, and

...indecent; it was sacrilegious to annoy an emperor, and in his irritation, he had an ex-Senator and twelve workmen who were in concentration camps taken out and shot on the charge that they had told irreverent stories about him.⁸⁸⁹

⁸⁸⁷ *The Times*, London.

⁸⁸⁸ From Wikipedia, the implied consequence of not joining the team effort is to be deemed an enemy. An example is the statement of the former US President George W. Bush, who said after 9/11 at the launch of his anti-terrorism campaign in the form “Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists.”

⁸⁸⁹ Sinclair Lewis, *It Can't Happen Here*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Shoot the wad,” goes *way back* to the early days of gunpowder and cannon, commonly used to mean expending all one’s resources, *throwing everything at it*, from words to weapons.

But there is more; that is, of *throwing* more than *everything*—but seemingly without end for *the state*, the practice of “printing” money (commonly issuing...) per an apparently endless line of credit, generating both perennial deficit and its aggregate, the debt. ⁸⁹⁰

Big deficits mean a growing federal debt—the total the government owes—already at its highest point since World War II. Extraordinarily low interest rates allow the U.S. to shoulder a heavier debt burden, but the debt is on an unsustainable course and its size may limit the government’s ability or willingness to continue to fight the economic ill effects of the pandemic or future economic downturns. ⁸⁹¹

And it seems (to me) that most do not *give a care*, taking the matter to its likely outcome, the debasing of the dollar and with that, the erosion of income, savings, and everything it effects. Given the inevitable, the collapse of the economy through gross mismanagement of money while, to recall the warning of Thomas Jefferson, *swindling futurity on a large scale*. And when or as the economy reaches *critical mass*, the dollar no more, something will be (and probably already is) there to replace it, rewarding those responsible..., yet leaving the rest (of us) in *dire straits*, dependent then on an international currency, an entirely digital form, with increased and intensified controls, restrictions and obligations that limit persons access to commerce, sustainment.

⁸⁹⁰ In fiscal year 2019, the U.S. federal debt was \$22.8 trillion, the deficit \$984 billion...the former is a lifetime running tally, while the latter is an amount calculated over a particular period.

⁸⁹¹ “How worried should you be about the federal deficit and debt?”, David Wessel, Brookings Institute, July 8, 2020.

“Proof is in...,” is generally followed by “the pudding”, where in its origin, the “proof” means the test of..., or the eating/tasting of the item, here to be “pudding”, the palatability.

And returning to the state and its operations described on the previous page, the aim of financial default is nothing less than well planned and executed; that by running the treasury *into the ground*, the public will be left largely *high and dry*, powerless, and thereby compliant with the described changes from the local to national spectrum to increasingly a global cabal—how is already established with legislation and POTUS approval underway.

As to form of governance to come, this cabal, is one unequaled in the centralized of POWER, its domain of control, but one *whose time has come*.

This requires an advanced technology not only terms of the weapons that enable the few to terrorize the many, but also in terms of the communications media that are necessary to indoctrinate them and the means of rapid transport which can knit vast masses into an organic whole.

Going so far as to groups—more masses— deemed in effect if not in actuality as “enemies of the state”, used as

All the resources are employed in unison in a real or imagined state of war against an internal and/or external enemy defined by class or race. ⁸⁹²

And though regimes are *nothing new under the sun*, yet this will be the *regime of regimes*; one unlike any found previously, most closely matched to the iconic 20th century, but dwarfing all as to size and scope, executing tyranny and totalitarianism in tandem, tantamount to all described in eschatology, *the End Times* prophesy.

⁸⁹² *Tyranny, A Study of the Abuse of Power*, Maurice Lately, 1969.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Breaking it down,” or to explain something in steps to possibly make it more conceivable, comprehensible.

To the steps taken and still to come, this *regime of regimes*, the simplest method to understand...is to try to conceive and comprehend the science(s) supporting it—not only the physical and natural sciences, but the political variety that supersedes the others with the expected exploitation endemic in/of POWERS, their abuses, customary for tyranny and its ilk, that

In war, the strong make slaves of the weak, and in peace the rich makes slaves of the poor.⁸⁹³

And while all of history and humanity is hemmed with/by slavery, causes, conditions, circumstances of that coming, a plague of pandemic proportions much deeper, more destructive.

Government today is growing too strong to be safe. There are no longer any citizens in the world there are only subjects. They work...for their masters...bound to die for their masters at call. Out of this, working and dying, they tend to get less and less.⁸⁹⁴

And given *that coming*, the unexpected..., given that,

A kindly man believes that all men are kindly, while one infected with the plague believes that all men lie and cheat and are hungry for power. In such a situation, *the living* is at an obvious disadvantage. When [one] gives to the plague-ridden they are sucked dry, then ridiculed or betrayed.⁸⁹⁵

Casting light on the prophetic that *the love of many will grow cold*, the struggle for kindness to continue while legions of *the lasting* continue their course, deadened, *deceiving, and being deceived*.⁸⁹⁶

⁸⁹³ Oscar Wilde.

⁸⁹⁴ H. L. Mencken.

⁸⁹⁵ Wilhelm Reich, *Listen, Little Man!*.

⁸⁹⁶ Referring to Matthew 24:12 and 2 Timothy 3:13,

problems, pains, and pleasures

“**Getting right**,” depends on much now, but much more as *the lasting among the masses* lose love, care, and civility, among us⁸⁹⁷.

As to the question, “What is right,” might also include decidedly what is good, *the better angels*. For both *good* and *right* are always *under the gun* of POWERS that alter meanings and definitions, changing absolutes to relatives *sprinkled* with suppositions, superlatives, and the special interests of the state.

In the question, “What is good,” comes an answer from Nietzsche, a heavy influence of violence and power exemplified in Nazism.

All that enhances the feeling of power, the Will to Power, and power itself in man.

And what is bad?

All that proceeds from weakness.

And what is happiness?

The feeling that power is increasing—any resistance overcome. ...The weak and the botched shall perish; first principle of our humanity. And they ought even be helped to perish.

What is more harmful than vice?

Practical sympathy with all the botched and the weak—Christianity.

“What is right,” is that *power makes right* not in the absolutes, *good* and *right*, but with the elimination of weakness similarly determined on a relative scale that serves the state, *the ends justifying the means*, of systematic murder on a scale unequalled since the beginning of time and never to be matched again. ⁸⁹⁸ *Getting right* or doing what is *right* is the *road less traveled*, less able to travel.

⁸⁹⁷ *The love of many is growing cold.*

⁸⁹⁸ From Matthew 24:21, *for there will be great distress, unequalled....*

Pondering on points of POWER

"Here we go again," as so-called "science", eugenics, *rears its ugly head*, exploited as doctrine to dismiss kindness while dedicated to cruelty, one group out to destroy another, and another, on the pretense of superiority, thereby and therein justified.

But this time, the "another" will be much larger in size and scale, given the world's population, and thus require much to *finish them off*, as essential to the *heaven on earth* idea, a utopia free and clear of any *suppositions, superlatives*, along with copiability.

The state claims and exercises the monopoly of crime.... It forbids private murder but itself organizes murder on a colossal scale.⁸⁹⁹

And, given impunity is also to contract and/or compel others to do the same with prejudice and perniciousness, the ground *fertile* for POWERS to plunder without cause or consequence.

It's worst extortions...carry no certain penalties under our laws. Since the first days of the Republic less than a few dozen of its members have been impeached and only a few obscure understrappers have ever been put into prison.⁹⁰⁰

Dismissing any accountability and the surety, abuses established-enabled, and expanded on a global scale, drawing an ever-deeper line between power and the powerless, the righteous and the rouges.

The contrast between the "we" and the "they" ...seems to be an essential ingredient in any creed which will knit together a group for common action..., employed by those who seek, not [just] of a policy, but the unreserved allegiance of huge masses.⁹⁰¹

And thus, one group led to destroy another, and another.

⁸⁹⁹ Albert Jay Nock, *Our Enemy, the State*.

⁹⁰⁰ H. L. Menschen.

⁹⁰¹ Friedrich A. Hayek.

“Rubber meets...,” followed by “the road” as one already used but now the featured phrase if not an idiom as: an idea put to the test the test to see if it works; or, as a point, the most important..., *the moment of truth*.

Published in 2019, a book by the same title ⁹⁰², described as an open message to Bridgestone Corporation, written perhaps in part to the Firestone and Ford tire controversy,⁹⁰³ brings to the fore the often-intense oversight, regulation, and certification common to commerce—and with that, the immense liability that occurs as legalities involving failures/defects, death, and injury.

As already presented but now, for purposes of pressing the point, is the contrast between such cases of commercial liability and that of drug companies granted legal immunity for pre-trials approved for public distribution, dispensing, across the populous. If/as some organizations and industries are held to high standards of product quality, performance, then why is/are these pharmaceutical companies not..., generating record profits, sales absent the cited, effects of illness and death let alone other long-term issues?

⁹⁰² *Where the Rubber Meets the Road: The Bridgestone/Firestone Conspiracy of Death & Destruction a True Story*, Joseph Lisoni, Gail Lisoni, is an Open Message to Bridgestone Corporation, appealing absent government or judicial intervention, for Bridgestone to abandon its use of substandard component parts and take immediate remedial measures in its tire manufacturing process and does not terminate its unlawful business practices or cease its human rights violations at rubber plantations.

⁹⁰³ From Wikipedia, **the Firestone and Ford tire** controversy was a period of unusually high failures of Firestone P235/75R15 ATX, ATX II, and Wilderness AT tires installed on the Ford Explorer and other similar vehicles. Subsequent investigations linked the failures to accidents that caused 271 deaths and over 800 injuries in the United States dating back to the early 1990s, and more internationally.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Shake the man...,” or to *shake someone up* (whether actually an idiom) is to shock or upset someone, though the preference here comes from the film, *The Hunt for Red October*, used by the Soviet commander Tupolev, “...shake the man loose,” as more than shocking, upsetting another, but setting them up for *the fall*.

To follow from the previous page, these drug companies have *made a killing*, generating record sales, revenue, and profits ⁹⁰⁴, legally without liability for the products’ ill-effects—not the least of which is the ineffectiveness observed in yet more cases of the “fully vaccinated” acquiring variations of the virus.

Aside from the questions of profit and liability, is that the cases must be curtailed, the vaccines—with repeated doses—as ostensibly the “right treatment” aside from other conventional treatments and *herd-immunity* as historically effective—but here, now, of little or no account by “science-based authorities” bolstered by the bellicosity of politicians, accented with high-profile figures, their endorsements largely weighted by their popularity, business, or other prowess. ⁹⁰⁵ Taking such efforts with all the events leading-up to and including the present, confusion and chaos comes as no surprise. ⁹⁰⁶

Who are you going to believe? Leading authorities on medical science, or 800 memes on your cousin’s Facebook page? ⁹⁰⁷

⁹⁰⁴ “Pfizer Reaps Hundreds of Millions in Profits from COVID Vaccine,” NYTimes, Rebecca Robbins and Peter Goodman, May 2, 2001.

“When Lifesaving Vaccines Become Profit Machines for Drug-Makers”, Bloomberg Businessweek, James Paton, John Lauerman, July 6, 2021.

⁹⁰⁵ In essence, endorsing if not demanding vaccination short of mandates, dictates, resignations, restrictions, and exclusions.

⁹⁰⁶ Confusion is created, calculated, to disempower the public (rather than providing conditions to inform as a basis for decision, action.

⁹⁰⁷ Samantha Bee.

“Whole lot a...,” with the ending words left to the reader though, for the given is gripping of POWERS on the dazed and confused, confronted by/with a drug delivered in a fraction of the normal development—at “warp speed”!⁹⁰⁸

Further is the possibility that *the state*, its agencies, are no longer viewed as credible or acting on behalf of the public (though an issue rarely if ever mentioned in/by mainstream news sources).

...according to a poll, eighty-two percent of Americans believed the government knew more about the flu than it was saying. And the number of people who declared themselves dead set against any vaccine the government came up with was steadily growing.⁹⁰⁹

But why should anyone doubt?

Then there is, with some association to doubt, the expected push-back; that the more demanding the state, the more resistant the stand-outs—not because of ignorance but because of convictions, conscience, and critical thinking that, condensed to a question, could be “What are they up to now,” or a remark, “This is a whole lot-a shit!”

Finally, but not lastly, is the possibility of foul-play; that the intentions and internalities of the drug has little to do with prevention but is yet another step toward world governance and, in the exploitations of science, alterations and eliminations of the human genome...species, *the culling* of the world’s population.

⁹⁰⁸ The program, Operation Warp Speed, was previously presented, but is being pushed in part with the proposition that if fully dispensed to/for the public, normalcy will be recoverable along with the economy.

⁹⁰⁹ Sigrid Nunez, *Salvation City*; this quote does not pertain to COVID but comes from a novel that imagines the aftermath of pandemic flu, as seen through the eyes of a thirteen-year-old boy uncertain of his destiny.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Pulling out all...,” or *pulling out all the stops* is analogous to *throwing everything at it* or *shooting the wad*, but on a grand scale, a great effort.

And with all the flavor and filling, *the state* is calling out everyone and everything to fully engage, ingest an experimental drug—*leaving no stone unturned* when it comes to coercion and finally hard forces as described in the footnotes of the previous page. Where is this going as an experimental drug dispensed on a global scale to practically everyone—except those granted exemptions.⁹¹⁰ Otherwise, the arbitrary policy seems set to cover as many as possible, the fate of those who fail to follow, never mind the risks they represent to society, the economy and everything considered as “normal”.

To dwell on *the drug*, the deployment and demands, is more than the program, “Operation Warp Speed”, but about the continued tendency for exploitation and expedience at any cost, pronounced or perceived, real, or imagined, but beyond *the commons*; but this time, per the direction from the World Health Organization (WHO), delegated to the state for implementation, execution, as one more example of national governance bowing to international POWERS.

On such a plain, panning the globe, is potentially more lying, cheating and theft endemic in/of such operations, operatives.

And the lie has, in fact, led us away so fare from a normal society that you cannot ever orient yourself any longer; in the dense gray fog, not even one pillar can be seen.⁹¹¹

⁹¹⁰ Noted exemptions include the POTUS staff, other government officials/offices, and the companies producing the drug.

⁹¹¹ Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.

“Hard (Full) stop,” is exactly as it sounds; a sudden and certain stop, the inertia idled by causes anomalous, “accidental”, or continuing of the common theme, as attempts of state actors in conjunction with the state’s agenda.

Call it “The Great Reset” ⁹¹² or nothing at all, but a *full stop* comes through a multitude of methods using a myriad of means, but nonetheless manufacturing consent and melding control through the advent of opportunity via a “crisis”.

Some say, “look at the simulations,” as a harbinger of crisis; that *the powers* forecast or broadcast their plans, putting to task the effort of connecting one (simulation)to the other (event) as perhaps *one piece in the puzzle of a whole lot-a shit*. But what is *coming to our homes*, modeled however, will make the COVID *lockdown* look like *child’s play*; the collection or series of crisis to *bring the world to its knees*, shifting yet more POWER to tyranny and totalitarianism springing from *the shelter of safety and security*.

Perhaps home is not a place but simply an irrevocable condition.⁹¹³

More and more to experience increasing, intensifying, statism; a condition that is not only irrevocable but intrusive, invasive, appearing as vital but truth is viral, changing not only who we are but what are and are not, above reproach while beneath contempt.

Modern society is subjected to a high degree of stress of the kind that normally leads to tyranny...and society becomes atomized into a “lonely crowd” of insecure individuals ready for the word of command of a master who will exploit...their craving for “togetherness” of the mass movement. ⁹¹⁴

⁹¹² See page 354 for a description of **The Great Reset**.

⁹¹³ James Baldwin, *Giovanni’s Room*.

⁹¹⁴ Maurice Latey, *Tyranny, A Study in the Abuse of Power*.

Pondering on points of POWER

“Know which end,” followed by/with “is up”, or basically, to know your position and hence, direction.

But in the portrait of what is painted is yet more confusion and chaos, that *gray fog*, so dense as to leave one in vertigo, disoriented and detached from anything remotely fixed, anchored, save what has come in the Scriptures, *the better angels of the spiritual helper*,⁹¹⁵ that strengthens in times of trials, trouble, and terror.

Faced with trouble that, for most, is inconceivable let alone incurred, the Biblical character, Job, put it so well when, after much loss⁹¹⁶amid unanswered pleas and unchecked counsel, said,

I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!⁹¹⁷

And it is the loss(es) that will make a spiritual man *out of men*, courage amid capitulation, and hope above all hopes, while the world crashes about us, crushed by the ancient but ardent avarice, *the root of all evil*.

I do not see how it is possible for a man to die worth [millions] in a city full of want, when he meets almost every day the withered hand of beggary and the white lips of famine. I do not see how he can do it. I should not think he could do it any more than he could keep a pile of lumber on the beach, where hundreds and thousands of men were drowning in the sea.⁹¹⁸

⁹¹⁵ As in keeping with Psalm 23, that *though I walk in the valley, yet I will fear no evil*, referring to the Holy Spirit.

⁹¹⁶ Job lost all his children, possibly his wife but certainly all his property and possessions and later, health, his body covered in boils.

⁹¹⁷ Job 19:25-27.

⁹¹⁸ Robert G. Ingersoll, *The Liberty of Man, Woman and Child*.

“**What’s up,**” as to follow, is known all too well as, *what’s happening*, what’s going-on, or something like of the sort, the kind. None that are cool would say, “What is up,” but sticks to the contraction with some swagger or jive, dragging the “up”. Unlike its use in the previous page, “up” is taken lightly, no direction given or taken, but more in moment, the *here and now*, the instant of the spoken words. What is not *up* is anything more than a few seconds, maybe years away, but potentially as close as *here and now*, an instant that is insistent to happen soon—with prevailing and panning effects, perhaps inconceivable, incomprehensible.

There is *life beyond life* and that alone is POWER, powerful, which is why/where Job found hope, the redeemer. As it is however, as much of this writing suggest, there is great struggle and sacrifice ahead whether it arrives now, tomorrow, or beyond.

But for now, another script from another film ⁹¹⁹ to consider; one that gives hope indirectly from a man’s faith but most certainly amid his own personal losses and his feeble but then fantastic way of realizing his own faults, if not redemption with some aspect recovery—most of all realizing that revenge is not enough for recovery, but that redemption is the way.

Life is a storm, my young friend. You will bask in the sunlight one moment, be shattered on the rocks the next. What makes you a man is what you do when that storm comes.

And the storm(s) are coming; yes, they are coming fast and furious, the fight of humanities’ lifetime, much as *in the days of Noah* but still, of times like none other.

⁹¹⁹ From Wikipedia, *The Count of Monte Cristo* is a 2002 American historical adventure film that is an adaptation of the 1844 novel of the same name by Alexandre Dumas.

“It is what it is,” as the least of my choices, for *if it is what it is* than what is it? For as it is, the one using it assumes the other knows *what it is*, whether they’ve bothered to explain or just left it *to fate* coincident with *The Count of Monte Cristo*.

Clearly *what it may be* is not always *clear*, obvious, or understood. *What it is* may be more than that intended, the message or meaning, than even the one using it, when considering that there are supposed, simple solutions to complex problems that, according to H. L. Mencken, are *unfortunately incorrect*.⁹²⁰ And by example, the circumstances and alleged correction for the current and incomplete program, “Operation Warp Speed”; that if everyone participates, then we can get back to normalcy, so goes the promotion,⁹²¹

Always a proposition but seldom a promise, what remains is for more to give-in, give-up, or give-out but, as with spirit of narcissism and its kind, to never give enough until *the gotten is done*, the *get-up-and-go* got-up and went—and it’s all the fault of those that gave—not took, time and time again.

The urge to save humanity is almost always only *a false face* for the urge to rule it.

And to *the take*, the taking, that means owning everything, everyone, and everybody. Still,

The most dangerous man to any government is the man able to think things out for himself, without regard to the prevailing superstitions and taboos. Almost inevitably he [concludes] that the government...is dishonest, insane, and intolerable...⁹²²

⁹²⁰ The actual quote is: “For every complex problem, there’s a solution that is simple, neat, and wrong.”

⁹²¹ “Fauci Says U.S. Could Return To Normal By Spring 2022 — If Vaccinations Go Up”, Forbes, April 23, 2021, Joe Walsh.

⁹²² H.L. Mencken, Prejudices: Third Series

“**As within the...**,” followed by “so without” or *as above. so below*, the words from Hermes Trismegistus.⁹²³ And taking what I can, this source’s sagacity, is that striving in contemplation and saintly piety is a good thing, whether learned or just learning, but finally discovering the truth flanked by facts.

Humanity looked in awe upon the beauty and the everlasting duration of creation. The exquisite sky flooded with sunlight. The majesty of the dark night lit by celestial torches as the holy planetary powers trace their paths in the heavens in fixed and steady meter—ordering the growth of things with their secret infusions.

And yet, with creation, *the created* continue to combat hubris⁹²⁴, a haughty spirit, an insatiable pursuit of deity, immortality. *And although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile, and their foolish hearts were darkened.*⁹²⁵

In the beginning it was so; *as within so without, as above so below*. But then that changed, casting darkness within, thus leaving us without, left to the law and its failures, its futility, while generations came and went as history accounts in some measure—that which POWER prefers—while the rest remains, the promises made perfect, *the kingdom come and will be done*⁹²⁶. And until then, what are *the created to do* but to *act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God.*⁹²⁷

⁹²³ From Wikipedia, **Hermes Trismegistus** s a legendary Hellenistic figure that originated as a syncretic combination of the Greek god Hermes and the Egyptian god Thoth.

⁹²⁴ Hubris: excessive pride or self-confidence.

⁹²⁵ Romans 1:21.

⁹²⁶ Taken from the Lord’s Prayer.

⁹²⁷ Taken from Micah 6:8.

Pondering on points of POWER

“**Best of times...**,” as the intro for Charles Dicken’s classic, *The Tale of Two Cities*,

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the [dark] winter of despair.

And while never reading his work or examining this, the context, the condensed explanation is conflict in the extreme. And what is forthcoming will indeed be so, a time of extreme conflict, a final clash of POWER, the outcome of which will be *a new world*; one not stained by sin and all its sinning, showing, storytelling of stories; but a world made full and without blemish as was *in the beginning*. Leading to this *new world* are those that trust by faith in the Scriptures as God’s word, the gospel and new covenant created by/through God, his son’s death, resurrection, and ascension—surpassing the bane of humanity, mortality, and the burden of sin(s), futility, forward in the return and conquest of Christ.

As times become worse, so too will times become better in that, as with the labor pains, there is birth, new life, and the joy of creation in full. And while there will be unparallel destruction there will also be the greatest revival of humanity, a final surge by the sources of sin in line with the *coming of the ages*, the buried and the believers along with a segment that choose and are chosen, who wisely receive the gift of salvation, redemption, and immortality—though leaving many to plunder and to perish as in *the days of Noah* ⁹²⁸.

⁹²⁸ From Genesis 6, **the days of Noah** describe an ancient time of incessant and irrevocable corruption and violence the earth over; and hence, in God’s grief and pain the flood aimed to destroy not only God’s creation but also the fallen angels, the Nephilim, and their offspring.

problems, pains, and pleasures

“...**The worst of...**” *times* is left without every detail, the timing of events, but is seemingly laden with enough information to interpret *the final days*, solicited from true prophets, past and present amid others who claim such POWER and yet are false.⁹²⁹ And thus, to add to *the worst of times*, are imposters, pretenders or any that do not know and tell of the truth—whether intentional or not—but *go on deceived and being deceived*.

Still, many will be deceived, many taken...., while *the love of many will grow cold* in the presence of increased lawlessness and the arrival of one described as such, lawless or sinful, but who is slated to *oppose God while exalting as a god the same*,⁹³⁰ initially posing as *good and right* but then a period of unparallel persecution,⁹³¹ following a period of international peace,⁹³² with *counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders*, and all that is allowed as a delusion for those that refuse to believe the truth⁹³³. The *man of lawlessness* is the culmination of all that is anti-Christ, counter-creation, wicked and evil, and all that aims to destroy all semblance of *the new world*—to include the formation of a *new world order*⁹³⁴.

⁹²⁹ From Wikipedia, **false prophets** are frequently referred to in the New Testament, with warnings in Matthew 7:15-20, Romans 16:17-20.

⁹³⁰ From 2 Thessalonians 2: 4.

⁹³¹ From crossway.org, *the man of lawlessness* (or destruction) will profane the reconstructed Jerusalem temple as prophesied in Daniel, chapters 9, 11 and 12, and in Isaiah 57, all to occur during a 7-year period called the “Great Tribulation”,

⁹³² *The man of lawlessness* which achieve preeminence by negotiating world peace, while setting the stage for a reign of terror.

⁹³³ From 2 Thessalonians 2: 9-12.

⁹³⁴ Wikipedia subtitles the **New World Order** (NWO) as “conspiracy theory”—yet it exists as international governance, via noted agencies, with emerging authority, described decades ago by then President

Pondering on points of POWER

"POWER as is," is defined across the sciences, the natural and the manmade, the social and political, and the trappings and terror of POWER, its forces that render man his own worst enemy; *that neither necessity nor desire, but the love for power is the demon of mankind*⁹³⁵.

The described "demon of mankind", is at the root (money...power), a nihilism beyond national borders, projected to produce a *mad, mad, mad, mad world* where

If we believe in nothing, if nothing has any meaning and if we can affirm no values whatsoever, then everything is possible, and nothing has any importance.⁹³⁶

Or if *the point is there ain't no point*,⁹³⁷ or as another puts it,

I think we are just insects: we live a bit and then die and that's the lot. There's no mercy in things. There's not even a Great Beyond. There's nothing.⁹³⁸

Or, as King Solomon put it, *all is vanity, a chasing after the wind*.

But with kings, and those like them, is tremendous capacity to conduct both *good* and *bad*, right, and *wrong*, the latter occurring when power is abused. And such kings or forms, while existing throughout the ages, will acquire and achieve their greatest abuses in the age of technocracy, a means of control like no other, propelled to its plunder the essence of creation to produce a utopia, a nirvana, a *new world order*.

George H. W. Bush during a state of the union address as an alternative to "jungle law".

⁹³⁵ Fredrich Nietzsche, *Will to Power*.

⁹³⁶ Albert Camus, *The Rebel*.

⁹³⁷ Cormac McCarthy, *No Country for Old Men*.

⁹³⁸ John Fowles, *The Collector*.

“POWER to come,” to continue from the previous page, will produce times like no other, suffering on an unequalled scale, yet

In face of this modern nihilism, Christians are often lacking in courage. We tend to give the impression that we will hold on to the outward forms whatever happens, even if God really is not there.

As the churches respond, react, or *render unto Caesar*.⁹³⁹

But the opposite ought to be true of us, so that people can see that we demand the truth of what is there and that we are not dealing merely with platitudes...it should be understood that we take this question of truth and personality so seriously that if God were not there, we would be among the first of those who had the courage to step out....⁹⁴⁰

Believing and embracing the full measure of faith, the foretelling that *if/as they hated me, they will hate you too*,⁹⁴¹ or *if anyone would follow..., he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me*⁹⁴².

And to supplement *faith*, the POWER of information, knowledge and wisdom, and the power of love, compassion, and care; that without such power, there is nothing, faith without works,⁹⁴³ as with *freedom*, not the abused forms of *the state*, often words without substance to entice, enforce, but that of God, the Holy Spirit,⁹⁴⁴ and *truth*⁹⁴⁵.

⁹³⁹ Taken from Jesus' instruction regarding money but applied here to infer churches will succumb—if not already subdued—to the *new world order, having a form of godliness* but apostate, worldly, and wayward.

⁹⁴⁰ Francis Schaeffer.

⁹⁴¹ John 15: 18-25.

⁹⁴² Matthew 16:24.

⁹⁴³ Inspired by Francis Schaeffer, *there is nothing uglier than an orthodoxy without understanding or without compassion*.

⁹⁴⁴ 2 Corinthians 3:17.

⁹⁴⁵ John 8:32. 1 Peter 2:16-17 – *live free...as servants of God*.